

ALECK HORMBY



BY: CHARLES STELL



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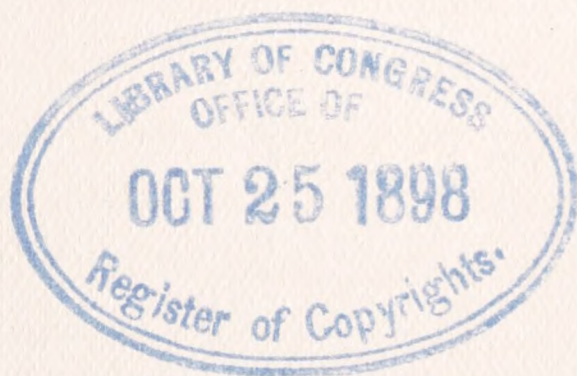
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ALECK HORMBY.

CHAPTER I.

ON the northern coast of Maine, in the year of 1861, there stood a small village named Darnley. It was situated on the top of tall cliffs, against which the waves of the ocean, when the tide was at its full, dashed with their greatest force.

The inhabitants of the village gained their living chiefly by fishing and renting their rooms during the season to summer boarders.

It was only a small place, the log cabins of most of the inhabitants being built after the style of the old Puritans, with here and there a brick mansion belonging to some wealthier inhabitant. But in some cases the fishermen lived in dwellings made from old vessels which had from time to time been wrecked upon the shore, and then afterwards dragged with considerable labor to the top of the cliffs, where they had then been inverted and covered with shingles to protect them from the storms of winter.

The houses were built on the crescent of the

small bay, without any regard to regularity, and in such position as were thought most favorable. A steep road had been cut down the cliffs to the sea-shore, by which the inhabitants and visitors ascended or descended to the beach.

Spread out upon the beach are the numerous nets of the fishermen, drying in the sun; with their corks and sinkers attached, being held down by large stones.

Around are lying pieces of timber that have been washed into the bay; while parts of old casks, boxes, and fragments of vessels show the loss of some ill-fated ship that has been driven on this perilous shore.

Most of the houses had gardens attached to them, in which the owners produced their yearly stock of vegetables; while in front of many of them were flower-beds, which showed the taste and good management bestowed upon them by their proprietors.

Down on the beach were some few rowing and sailing boats, which were rented out by the day or hour to visitors; also about a dozen or so bathing machines, while close up to the cliffs were numerous boys and men who made a living by charging so much per hour for the use of the donkeys or ponies they owned.

Frequently during the summer months you might see large numbers of the city youths, of both sexes, enjoying themselves, laughing, screaming and shouting, on the backs of these patient but stubborn beasts; while sometimes seated on the same animals you might observe some of the older ones who preferred riding to walking to the top of the cliffs from the beach.

In one of the prettiest of these cottages at the time we are writing of there resided a man by the name of Ned Hormby and his young wife Annie. She was the daughter of a prosperous grocer in the neighborhood, and had been married a little over a year to Ned, whose genial ways and manly figure had gained her affections.

Annie Hormby was a little over twenty-three years of age; she had a fine figure, which was as straight as a dart, dark complexion, brown eyes and massy tresses of rich, black hair. A little over six weeks before she had become a mother, but the little one had been frail, living only a few days.

Up to this time her life had been a joyous one; she had a husband whom she loved dearly, then an infant boy had been given her, a perfect picture of his father; but now he had been taken away from them and she left a mourner.

Ned Hormby was about thirty years of age, handsome, tall and powerfully built, and the owner of a smart fishing boat, the Mermaid, which now rode at anchor in Darnley Bay.

This vessel was the pride of Ned Hormby's life, and held the next place in his esteem to his wife; there was not a swifter craft on the coast of Maine than the Mermaid, nor a sweeter or handsomer wife than Annie Hormby.

There were several other boats putting out from Darnley, whose owners gained a large part of their livelihood by fishing; but the Mermaid was the largest and best equipped boat in the fleet, as also were his quarters for curing and smoking the fish on shore.

The boats used to leave Darnley quite early in the morning, going anywhere from five to twenty-five miles from the shore.

The average catch per boat was from five to eight hundred pounds per day; the amount varying of course with the fisherman's proverbial luck. The men planted their nets wherever the fish could be caught, moving them from time to time, as they thought best, from one course to another. These nets extended between three and four miles when in the water, and were allowed to remain set about three or four days.

They were then lifted, the fish taken out and then conveyed to shore, dried and mended. After this they were wound upon large reels, which were common sights around the village of Darnley.

When the fish were brought home they were either sold to peddlers or smoked, the cured ones being shipped to the surrounding towns; Ned Hormby consigning some of his goods as far distant as Boston, New York and Philadelphia.

Ned Hormby also employed quite a number of persons during the busy part of the fishing season in curing and packing the fish and mending the nets.

After the death of their little one Ned had done the best he could to console Annie, but she had refused to be comforted, deeply grieving the loss of her baby boy.

It was the month of July, the day had been hot and oppressive, and the night was very sultry.

The sun had set, the sea was calm, while an unnatural stillness hung around the bay.

As the night advanced and the darkness deepened a light shone from the windows of the cottage of Ned Hormby.

The cottage was a picture of neatness, consisting of two bedrooms, a sitting and dining room, kitchen and shed. The rooms in the house were

well furnished for people of their class, with nice pictures hanging on the walls, while geraniums and other plants in vases decorated the windows.

The shed was filled with the articles used by Ned in plying his vocation with old father Neptune. Oars and boat hooks, fishing nets, corks and sinkers, were spread out or thrown around in great confusion.

In a chair at one of the windows facing the ocean, on this sultry night, sat Annie Hormby, crying and sobbing as if her heart would break, as she thought of her lost one; while with his arms around her, trying to comfort her, at her feet knelt her husband. This endeavor instead of relieving her troubled condition, only brought forth a fresh torrent of tears, as she buried her face upon the shoulders of her husband, who wiped the tears from her eyes and tenderly kissed her.

Suddenly the sound of the fog-horn breaks in upon them, then, hand in hand, they walk out into the garden to view the night.

This front garden of Ned Hormby's was one of the best places in Darnley for viewing the ocean from.

The night was as black as pitch, with a thick fog coming in from the water.

Scarcely had the two left the house when a

violent wind storm arose, blowing out the lamp in the house, and at the same instant a vivid flash of lightning burst through the foggy darkness, a low rumbling of thunder followed, while another rush of wind swept along the cliffs straight from the sea.

Then all was quiet for a short time, until Ned was startled by observing a rocket go up, far out at sea. He knew at once that some unfortunate vessel had missed her course in the fog, and was being driven by the strong current upon their remorseless cliffs.

There was not much time for thought, for soon there came a terrific tempest, with terrible flashes of lightning, and thunder like heavy artillery, which, combined with the roar of the wind and the angry downpour of rain, forced them to seek shelter in the house. Soon the rain passed over, and Ned and Annie Hormby once more went out into the night.

Again they perceived rockets going up from the doomed vessel, and Annie asked: "Can we do anything to save her, Ned? Shall we light a fire upon the cliffs to warn them of their danger?"

"You come with me into the house," replied Ned, holding her firmly by the waist, "for I am afraid the wind will carry you over the cliffs."

Entering, Ned hastily selected an empty barrel, packed it full of shavings, and ran with it to the verge of the precipice, while Annie stood at the door with some staves of dry wood to renew the blaze. In a short time the tempest blew the flames to a great height, illuminating all around.

"They'll see that," said Ned.

He had scarcely uttered the words when another rocket went up. At the same time the fog passed away, and the moon shone forth revealing the ship.

One of her masts had broken off and lay over the side of the vessel knotted in a mass of sails and ropes, while the men on board could be distinctly seen at work with axes trying to cut it away. Then there arose a great cry on board, which could be heard above the roar of the wind and water as a tremendous wave broke over the wreck carrying away men, the mast, casks and boats into the raging surf.

The ship was now a mere toy for the waves. Great breakers rolled over her, threatening to engulf them, but she always rose in time to prepare for the following wave.

As the day began to break the storm increased in its violence, and Ned, seeing that they could

render no further assistance, persuaded Annie to try to get some rest.

But there was a dark gloom in the solitary chamber, sleep refused to come to either of them, and before long they were up once more and making their way down to the beach. Numbers of people were already up, as the news spread, all running in one direction facing the wild sea.

It was now about four o'clock in the morning, the storm was still raging fiercely, the ship was about half a mile from the shore and dragging her anchors. The second mast was still upright, with the torn sails and broken ropes cracking like whips as the wind beat them to and fro.

Then one of her anchors parted, leaving the ship dependent on a single cable in a storm that made her position hopeless.

As the daylight increased the men on shore, with the aid of their glasses, made her out to be a large emigrant ship of English build, probably destined for New York or Boston.

She was well manned, and had her captain been aware of the small harbor he would have had little trouble in beaching his vessel. But there were no means of communicating with the vessel, and soon the other mast went overboard.

Then groups of women and children were dis-

cernible on board, clinging to each other, while every angry wave swept some from the deck into the seething abyss of waters.

The men on shore ran about, helpless to aid them; while the women clasped their hands and prayed, or, shrieking, turned their faces away, crying for help where no help could come.

Quickly the other cable parted, leaving her utterly helpless.

Now the vessel, which had up to this time been riding with her stern to the shore, slowly veers around, then leaping over the waves, her head turning slowly, she sinks into the trough of the sea with her side to the full face of the wind. A towering wave now swept her decks, which were crowded with people; but in a few seconds nearly all had disappeared; only a few of the strongest being able to hold on to whatever they had been able to grasp. Again another wave struck her, and again she righted, but there were still fewer persons on her deck; she now drifted helplessly on, her rudder broke, nearly turning her over, and again she disappeared from view.

Then some one cried: "They're lowering a boat," which was soon filled with women and children; it had scarcely left the side of the vessel ere it was swamped.

Meanwhile the once proud ship rolls heavily on towards the northern rocks; sometimes high on the waves, then nearly covered by the sea. At last a wave caught her with resistless power and dashed her high up on the rocks, which gored her sides with their rugged, sharp and piercing edges.

"Those rocks will soon finish her," said Ned to Annie Hormby.

He had been watching, glass in hand, and giving details to his wife of all that happened to the unfortunate vessel. "I think, Annie, you had better go home and try to get some rest, for she'll soon go to pieces, and there is not one person alive on her now."

Annie, however, could not move; she was rooted to the spot.

For a short time the vessel held together, then she began to break up; first the entire deck was broken off by an angry wave which broke full upon her; then another lifted her once more, crashing her with immense force higher on the rocks, where soon she began to crumble to pieces.

Now the boiling surf is enriched with her cargo, and the fishermen and natives are busy rescuing bales, barrels and merchandise of every description, each making their own pile and keeping it

distinct, so that they will be able to claim their share of salvage.

Not yet had one single living person been washed ashore, but scores of dead ones were continually coming in, all of whom were carried beyond the reach of the angry waves and covered with sails or tarpaulin.

The minister of the village, with his wife and her sister, were busy taking a description of each one and making an inventory of everything found on their persons, to enable them to prove their identity if needed. The clothing worn, color of the hair, marks upon their linen, anything that might lead to subsequent identification.

Then horses and a wagon having been secured, they were slowly and carefully carried up the toilsome road and deposited in the little church, which was turned into a temporary morgue, while the communion table was used for depositing the articles on taken from each person.

Small cards were placed on each lot and marked, taken from number one, and so on. Many of the corpses were almost nude, showing that the unfortunate ones had been rudely awakened from their sleep, and had rushed on deck trying to escape, only to meet their death outside in place of in.

Not one in fifty were ever claimed; of the steerage passengers not a single one, and very few of the others.

Then came the work of burying the dead; neat coffins were made for the reception of the bodies, the persons being placed in them in their clothing; four were deposited in each grave, with the number corresponding to the description taken of each one marked on a small wooden cross, which was placed on their graves.

CHAPTER II.

During the excitement on the beach, when the bodies and cargo began to be washed ashore, everyone was busy; Ned Hormby and his wife amongst the rest.

Soon Annie cried out, "Oh, Ned, what is that over there?" Then there was a general rush forward on the part of the men to secure the prize.

The force of the waves, however, was so great that they were beaten down by them and dragged into the surf by the undercurrent; only regaining the shore by the assistance of the crowd, who, with a line, helped them to reach places of safety.

Only one man had been able to force his way through the monstrous waves and reach the floating object; this was Ned Hormby, who had a rope, which he fastened securely to the object and then turned to the shore, with the other end held firmly in his grasp. Annie's heart heaved with emotion as she beheld the strong form of her husband successfully contending with the surf, which had driven back the others.

She was the first to rush into the water and help her husband to gain a footing on the treacherous beach.

Willing hands were put out to haul on the rope, which was quickly drawn in, and then the men rushed into the water and dragged the prize on shore. Lashed to a spar by a strong rope, with her long fair hair floating on the water all covered with seaweed, they beheld the dead body of a young woman.

She had evidently been asleep when the crash came, for she was in her night clothing, while upon her breast wrapped in a shawl, held firmly in the grip of death, lay the body of an infant, probably two months old.

There was nothing upon them to indicate who they were, save a small locket attached to the neck of the child, with the initials A. Mc. L. engraved thereon.

Ned hastily cut the ropes and carried the body to the place where the dead bodies were being deposited; while the village teacher lifted up the child.

"Is the baby dead?" asked Annie, as she drew nearer to the men.

"I am afraid it is," replied the teacher, as he

handed the little one into the arms of the eager Annie. She took away the wet shawl and wraps, covered it with her own, and pressed it to her breast, while her hands were soon briskly rubbing it all over.

The boy was chilled through, but soon showed signs of returning animation. In a short time he commenced to cry, and before long, to Annie's great joy, began to smile upon her. She hurried off home with her precious burden, dressed it in some of the clothing belonging to her own child, and pressing it to her breast felt a mother's happiness; her own boy had been replaced by this little stranger, washed in from the wreck, a cast-away.

The vessel had now completely broken up, and for several days the natives of Darnley, visitors and others, were busy rescuing the portions of her cargo that were washed ashore; but of all the vast concourse of people that had a few days before crowded her decks, not one was saved alive save this baby boy.

When the excitement from the wreck was over, and the bodies were all decently buried, the minister paid a visit to the home of Ned and Annie Hormby.

He took a description of the baby and locket and advertised them in most of the principal newspapers, but never received any reply or inquiry about the boy, who from thence on was cared for by the Hormbys.

Thus the time passed on; no other child was sent to or wished for by Ned and his wife, their best attention and love being bestowed on the little stranger.

When young Aleck Hormby grew old enough he was sent to school, where great attention was paid to him by the school teacher, who considered himself a kind of second father to the boy.

Aleck also accompanied his father on many of his fishing trips during the summer season. This night as the sun is sinking Annie sits by the cottage door knitting, and watching for the return of her husband and boy. It is just seven years ago to-night since the wreck, and Ned has had the boy with him this day.

The darkness deepened; and as Annie gazed wistfully out on the bay she wonders what is keeping them out so late; "Surely nothing can have happened to them," says she. Then going inside the cottage she lighted a lamp and placed it in the window; the same window where, seven years

before, the bright light had shone through, and said "They will see that light far away." Still the time passes slowly on; there was no sound save the murmur of the wind and the breaking of the waves upon the shore. Then the wooden clock, one of the old-fashioned ones with long pendulum, chains and weights, that hung from the wall, struck nine.

Wherever can they be?

The wind was now blowing furiously as she rose from her chair and once more nervously looked out from the door. It was very dark outside, not an object to be seen, so Annie returned into the house, went on her knees and offered a fervent prayer for the protection from the Most High for those she so dearly loved.

The clock struck once more—ten; and again Annie tried to pierce the darkness, but all to no purpose; then she heard the grating of a boat as it struck the pebbly beach, and wondered if it was the Mermaid.

Had the boat arrived? Were her darling ones safe? were questions she kept asking herself as she paced to and fro in the garden.

The boat she had heard striking the beach was the Mermaid; soon the sound of hurried footsteps

were heard outside, then little Aleck, a handsome young sailor boy, rushed in, and was soon tenderly embraced in the arms of Annie Hormby.

Now Ned follows, and Aleck makes room for the father.

Quickly a clean cloth is spread upon the table, while upon it is placed a large piece of cold ham, a loaf of bread, and cups of warm coffee.

"What detained you so long to-night?" asked Annie.

"We had good luck to-day," replied Ned, "were quite busy, and could not possibly get home earlier."

Now Annie fondly drew the boy to her, and placing him upon her knee, pressed him to her breast; then parting his curly hair she warmly kissed him. Before long she began to take off his clothing, saying, "You are tired I know to-night, my boy, and you ought to have been in your little bed long ago."

"Oh, no, I am not tired," replied Aleck, hugging his mother, who looked down upon him with pride.

We will take a look at and give our readers a brief description of young Aleck previous to his being put to bed. He is just over seven years old,

but looks at least nine. He is tall for his age, gracefully and well built, with handsome features, large, light blue eyes, and bright, curly hair.

Too soon young Aleck Hormby's summer vacation came to an end. He has had a glorious two months, partly spent with his father, which has been a life of adventure to him; up and down the coast on the Mermaid, helping the fishermen with his little brown hands, the pride and pet of all the men on board. At other times he would wade on the seashore with his companions, setting lines for fish, or with a net catching shrimps, crabs or lobsters, with which the coast was well supplied.

Then again he would get among the boys with their donkeys on the beach, often trying to steal a ride on these watchful animals, who seemed to know in an instant when they were giving a ride gratuitously, and used their utmost endeavor to throw off the pilferers into the sand, which amused the boys greatly.

Until Aleck was six years old Annie had kept him at home, instructing him herself in the arts of reading and writing, but he had now completed his first year in school. No mother could possibly have done more for her child than did Annie Hormby for little Aleck; and she was well

repaid for her work by the affection she received in return.

Now comes the morning for the opening of school once more, and Aleck, having received a warm embrace from his mother, throws the straps to his books across his little shoulder and is off.

The village of Darnley was blessed above other things with having a good school. The building stood apart by itself, and was surrounded by a large playground for the use of the children. The teacher, Mr. Bentley, was a good and conscientious man, with a young family of his own.

Aleck was somewhat afraid of school at first, but the teacher soon made his pupils feel at home by treating them with the most considerate kindness. Had they been his own children his treatment of them could not have been marked with more affection. His chief anxiety was to impart to them a knowledge of the right course to pursue, with a full appreciation of it. His censure was not often used and was embodied in his praise of others, his chief punishment consisting in withholding reward.

Poor little Aleck was rather unhappy on being first sent to school, and often ran off to a quiet corner of the playground, where he burst into tears. But one day two of the other boys caught

him crying; they immediately began to taunt him with being a mamma's darling, asking him at the same time, "if he was crying for his mammy?" This Aleck could not stand; he turned on his nearest tormentor and struck him on the nose, which sent that young worthy howling to his mamma with a bloody nose, at the same time stopping Aleck's tears on the school subject.

Frequently Mr. Bentley would give his pupils a half-day holiday, starting off with them for the neighboring woods, hunting for birds' nests, wasps' nests and butterflies. Some of the older ones would often stay with the teacher, but they generally scattered in all directions until it was time for them to return.

Then came the winter, when he would teach the boys to slide and skate, help them to make giant snow men, and frequently give them sleigh rides; loving his pupils, setting them all a good example, and being beloved in return.

So Aleck's school days passed away, his mother often giving him good advice; to be diligent in his studies, too proud to tell an untruth, or do a mean action; never to provoke a quarrel, nor allow himself to be bullied, and to be strictly honest in all his dealings.

Thus the time rolls on, until Aleck is fourteen

years of age, when he has accomplished all that it is possible for him to learn in the village school, Teacher Bentley declaring that he is the smartest and best boy in the school. He is gentlemanly in his manners, one of the best ball players, and the fleetest runner in school, although some of the boys are several years his senior; he is kind and attentive to all the gentler sex, therefore it is not to be wondered at that he is a general favorite.

CHAPTER III.

In this village of Darnley there resided at the time we are writing of a lawyer, whose name was Richard Small.

Lawyer Small's family consisted of himself, his wife, and a son and daughter.

He was considered to be pretty well supplied with this world's goods by his neighbors; his office and practice was in the neighboring town of Southport, to which place he traveled every morning by rail, returning home at night. He picked up an occasional case in Darnley, but these cases were few and far between. He resided in Darnley chiefly on his wife's account, who loved to be near the ocean.

Young Harry Small and his sister Nellie attended the village school the same as the rest of the children in the village. Harry was about one year older than Aleck Hormby, while Nellie was about the same age.

The two boys were firm friends, striving to excel each other in school and in their games outside;

this had always been done, however, in a friendly spirit; no jealousy ever existed between them.

The school days of the two boys being over in the village school, they have once more their long-looked-for two months' vacation, which is spent in much the same manner as we have before described.

Nellie Small was passionately fond of drawing; she might be frequently seen during summer in the fields, on the cliffs, or on the beach, sketch book in hand, taking drawings from nature.

On these journeyings she was generally accompanied by a large black Newfoundland dog, a favorite of her's, named Rover.

One day during this vacation Nellie proceeded down to the beach with her sketch book, where, having taken her favorite seat on the top of a boulder close to the cliff, she fell to work sketching. So intent was she on her work that she forgot all about the tide, which had turned, and was slowly surrounding her.

Closer and closer the waves girdled about her, until, when Nellie looked up, she was surrounded by water, with the tide still rising.

One cry of intense agony burst from her lips.

She saw the waves playing around the boulder

at her feet, while behind and in front of her the path was closed.

"Help! Help!" she cried, as she cowered with fear; but no human voice could reach the top of those cliffs above the noise made by the waves.

The reader has no doubt heard a storm sinking into a momentary lull. A sudden cessation of noise we cannot account for. A time, for instance, when a noise has suddenly become hushed and you could hear a pin drop.

In such a lull once more Nellie frantically cried: "Help! Help!"

Suddenly over the face of the cliffs there comes the barking of a dog. His sharp ears have caught the cry of that well-known voice, the frantic cry of his beloved mistress.

Now Nellie sees two heads peering over the verge of the precipice and then quickly disappear from view.

Meanwhile Aleck Hormby and her brother Harry are quickly rushing to her rescue. They had been walking together talking over their plans for the future when they were startled by the barking of Rover. They were close to the edge of the cliffs, and on looking over to discover the cause of the dog's barking, beheld the situation of Nellie.

Off both sprang as one; Aleck outran his companion, but not by very much, for by the time that Aleck was in a rowboat, and had got the oars ready, Harry also jumped into the boat, accompanied by the dog, who refused to stay behind.

The two pulled for dear life, and were none too soon, for the tide was by this time up to Nellie's chin.

It had been a matter of considerable difficulty for some time for her to keep her position on the boulder and resist being washed off by the waves into the water. A few moments more and she must have been swept away. She could no longer cry, for terror had mastered her and struck her dumb. She saw the black waves licking around her on every side, while with hands and feet she clung to the boulder. She was ready to sink with fear and exhaustion, when she felt herself lifted into the boat.

Then she fainted.

Aleck and Harry soon rowed back with the girl, who was quickly carried to the home of Ned Hormby.

When Nellie recovered, Annie Hormby was bending over her applying restoratives, while Aleck and Harry had ran off to apprise the Smalls, and procure dry clothing for her. She was not

much the worse for her thrilling accident and immersion, and in a few days completely recovered.

One of the first things she did on her recovery was to pay a visit to the home of the Hormbys to thank Aleck for the manly and courageous part he had taken in rescuing her; for to him and the dog she knew she owed her existence.

Mr. Small had previously called upon Aleck, warmly thanking him for the service he had rendered them, also complimenting him highly for the coolness and courage he displayed on such a trying occasion.

Aleck and Harry were for some time the heroes of Darnley, which they justly deserved to be.

CHAPTER IV.

Again the midsummer holidays draw to a close, and it has been decided, at the urgent request of the two boys, to send them to a private school, close to Bangor, for two years.

Mr. Small had selected the place for them.

Now comes the morning for their departure. They have both taken an affectionate leave of their relatives at home, while the boys of the village have turned out en masse to shake hands with them and shout good bye as they depart.

Their school was situated in the suburbs of Bangor in a lovely spot. Sheltered in a valley, the spire of the old church rose far above the tops of the trees surrounding it; while the Penobscot River flowed through the glen, where often on a holiday the two boys caught a basketful of trout. The school and house were surrounded by a brick wall.

In the front this wall was about four feet high, while on the other three sides it was about six feet high. There was a gate in the wall sufficiently

large to admit horses and carriages; a dense shrubbery with a large lawn was in front of the house, while behind were the stables and out-houses, the garden, playground, school and servants' quarters.

The boys were required to rise at seven o'clock in summer and walk to the bathing place on the river, about a mile distant; after their plunge they returned to breakfast, which was served at eight o'clock.

Then came school from nine o'clock until twelve, after that dinner. From two to four o'clock school again, with supper at six, the remainder of the time being spent in recreation, or in any other way that pleased them best; they were, however, forbidden to leave the grounds without a special permit.

This gave them all the liberty they could wish for; the rule regarding a permit simply stopped any boy or young man from prowling about the town at night. Then came a light supper at half past eight, after which the boys were expected to retire to their bedrooms for the night.

In winter their bath was taken in a large room fitted up for that purpose in one of the outbuildings; the time for their studies, meals and recreations being the same.

The principal, Mr. John Shepherd, and his wife took a great interest in the boys, who were treated in all respects as if they were members of the family.

At this school our two boys were, as before, inseparable companions; of course they got into scrapes at times, as most boys do; they would sometimes stay out too late for school, forgetting the time, bird-nesting or fishing.

Harry had a collection of birds' eggs, and would frequently wish to add fresh species thereto; they would forget that time flies in such pursuits, and consequently return late.

At other times they would go into town during forbidden hours, and frequently meet Mr. Shepherd or some of the teachers when doing so, for which they were punished by having extra lessons to perform.

They went to bed at nine o'clock; the hours for sleep from nine to seven being long ones for boys, they consequently lay awake in the dark for an hour or two, each boy telling stories by turns.

They had also pillow fights in their rooms, often creating a great rumpus, and the teacher on duty for the night, after listening about at the doors of the rooms, would make a sudden descent on the

guilty parties, giving them additional work for the morrow as punishment.

Most of the boys had pets of some kind in their rooms, or in the outbuildings; robins, mocking-birds, magpies, canaries, pigeons, hedgehogs, white mice and other favorites being kept, while frequent exchanges and sales of the same would be made by the boys.

The discipline in school was very strict, but Aleck and Harry were both industrious in their studies and imbibed a great amount of knowledge.

During their first week at the place they struck up an acquaintance with a room-mate of theirs, Tom Bromley by name, who was in his second year in school, and who kindly offered to initiate them in all the mysteries connected with their new life. Bromley was considered the best all-around athlete in the school; he took great pride in recording his deeds of renown, how he vanquished such a boy in their trials last June, and won the greatest number of prizes the same month in a contest with a neighboring school.

When the three had been acquainted a few days he proposed one morning, after their swim in the river, as they were returning to school, to show them the place where the fights took place, after which he proposed a run across the country.

Of course Aleck and Harry were ready for the fray, not then knowing the reputation of Bromley.

Away they sped, Bromley first; his knowledge of the ground being of some service to him, but Aleck and Harry kept well up with him, while Bromley found he had no mean competitors to deal with, for as they passed their goal there was scarcely a yard between the three, and Bromley knew that he would have to work to keep his laurels.

“My word,” said Bromley, as soon as he got his breath, “you’re pretty good runners.”

Then came their games of baseball and football, in which both our new youngsters gave a good account of themselves.

Thus the time passed on until the end of their first year in the school; the two boys passed their examination with great credit and were to be promoted after vacation.

Bromley found, if he was a match for them in running, he was out of the race altogether in school, and was left far behind.

Then came the last school day of the year, when the principal went round to each class distributing the prizes, of which both Aleck and Harry were recipients—also their reports for home.

The next morning all was bustle and confusion;

expressmen staggered about with trunks and boxes, and hurrahing, holloaing, and shouting, they are off. Aleck, to his intense joy, is once more safe in the fond arms of his mother; then shaking hands heartily with his father; while, as they partake of the supper, which has been got up in his honor, he recounts his doings of the past year in school, and there is not a prouder couple in Maine that night than Ned and Annie Hormby.

CHAPTER V.

Here they are, all back again at school, and with new comers to swell the list, amounting to over one hundred boys, ranging from nine to eighteen years of age, most of them putting all their energy into their work.

It had been decided in the spring that the athletic sports belonging to the school, and the contest with the neighboring school, should not take place until September.

Young Bromley found that this year he had to share a large amount of the prizes and points with Aleck and Harry.

Most of the boys were full of fun outside, with as many tricks as monkeys, and as fluent in excuses as an Irish cook. During their second year at school Aleck and Harry were much looked up to; being copied by the younger boys, for they saw that if they were celebrated for their prowess in the games outside that they could be just as attentive to and lead in matters connected with their inside studies.

I think there is no place in this wide world of ours where personal character has more weight than in our schools; where the larger boys have more influence for evil or good; where they are looked up to as examples, and copied by the younger boys.

I know from personal experience what I say here, having had the difficult subject to deal with for many years; they are like sheep, and follow their leader.

Remember this, you older boys, and try to act and speak like men; be fair and just to the smaller boys, and refrain from doing anything which is not honorable and right, and remember also that the evil that boys do, as well as that of men, lives after them.

Do not think, my boy readers, that I am going to preach even a short sermon to you, or set up these two boys as paragons of excellence, for they were nothing of the kind. They both knew that their parents must be making some sacrifice to send them to a school of this description, and endeavored to get as much as they possibly could for their money; they were both diligent in their school work; therefore, their teachers and the principal took an interest in them and tried to help them all they could.

Outside, after school hours, they frequently got into trouble.

Some of the boys belonged to a musical society in Bangor, and were allowed to attend the rehearsals every Wednesday evening.

About half way between the town and school, in a lonely part of the road, there resided in a small cottage a man who got his living by doing odd jobs around for the wealthy families.

The boys used to make this man's life miserable by playing all the possible tricks they could upon him. One of their favorite ones was, as they returned from their rehearsals at night, about a dozen in number generally, to kick this man's door as they passed, one after another, and then run, the man as a rule chasing them, but never being able to catch them. At last he complained to the principal, and that gentleman resolved to watch the boys. Accordingly, the following Wednesday night, as they were returning home, Harry and Aleck, the two first boys in the group, kicked the door as usual and then ran—right into the arms of Mr. Shepherd.

The two boys were punished the day following for this offense, while all their names were erased from the list of members of the Bangor musical society.

In their walks outside they frequently got into trouble with the neighboring farmers, the boys making frequent raids upon their orchards and gardens. They had not the slightest cause for doing this, for they could get all the fruit they needed at home; they did it simply for mischief.

On one occasion some of the boys made a raid upon one of the farmer's orchards close by; the farmer perceiving them in the trees hastily seized a cudgel, then loosening his watch dog he immediately started in pursuit of the thieves.

The boys in their eagerness to escape ran into and trampled to death part of a flock of geese; the farmer stumbled and fell among the geese, breaking his arm.

The day following he drove over to the school in his buggy, with his arm in a sling, and made a complaint to the principal.

The boys were assembled in school and the culprits asked to confess.

Of course they were all innocent.

They were questioned separately, but all denied any knowledge of the affair. Then the farmer was asked if he could pick out any of the culprits; he immediately selected Harry, Aleck and Bromley as three of the offenders. Harry and Bromley easily proved that they were in the school grounds

at the time when the theft and accident occurred, but Aleck could not prove an alibi.

He told Mr. Shepherd he was out alone with a book reading at the time of the occurrence, which was true; but the farmer persisted in saying that Aleck was present, and that he was also the ring-leader in the trouble. Mr. Shepherd settled the matter with the farmer, paying him handsomely for all damages, and then punished Aleck—he still protesting that he was innocent—in the presence of the whole school.

The master thought the farmer was sure about Aleck being the principal offender, and that he was also trying to screen his companions from blame.

Shortly afterwards one of the boys was taken sick; he confessed the names of all the boys who had taken part in the affair, and Aleck was proved to be innocent in the matter. Mr. Shepherd just as publicly, in the presence of the whole school, begged Aleck to forgive him for the mistake, and apologized for having punished him.

This, of course, cleared Aleck, but the public punishment still rankled in his bosom, and he would frequently tell Harry Small that when he got big enough, if it took ten years, he would give Shepherd a licking for it in return.

But if Aleck had grown and grown until he was as large as Goliath he would never have become large enough to thrash Mr. Shepherd, for long before he had done growing he knew and acknowledged that Mr. Shepherd was the best friend he ever had.

CHAPTER VI.

Some time has passed since the events recorded in our last chapter happened; and the end of the school year is rapidly approaching.

Aleck has made great progress in his studies and is now at the head of the school.

Harry and Bromley have also distinguished themselves.

All three are now fine strapping fellows, but thorough boys still.

Constant intercourse with Aleck and Harry has been of immense service to Bromley; it has stimulated him in his work in school and shown him that there is something beyond running and baseball.

One fine evening about the middle of May, as they were all in the playground conversing at dusk, one of the boys remarked: "Do you fellows know that small-pox has broken out in some of the houses not far away from here on the Bangor road?" Most of the boys laughed at and ridiculed him for his report, while others were afraid of its being true.

Soon their fears were verified, for one of the teachers caught the disease.

He was quickly removed, and every precaution taken to stop the plague from spreading. The whole school was assembled and told by the doctor that a careful examination had been made, that there was nothing to fear, and no reason for stopping the work in school. Still those who desired could proceed to their homes at once, while those who decided to stay must be vaccinated as a precaution against catching the disease. Many of the boys took advantage of the liberty to return to their homes; while others wished to stay for the examinations, considering it cowardly to leave.

In a short time—the following Saturday—while the remaining boys were in the playground, the report got abroad that the teacher was dead; soon their games were stopped, while a serious feeling pervaded the whole group.

On the day following the report was confirmed by Mr. Shepherd proclaiming it to the whole school, at the same time paying a warm tribute to the capabilities and virtues of their departed friend.

A few days passed gloomily away; then one of the boys sickened, and soon Mr. Shepherd himself

was struck down with the loathsome disease. Never till then had our boys felt how their master was knit to their hearts; they moved gently about their rooms, while the playground was hushed.

The crisis came; the master was taken from them; the boy slowly recovered.

It still wanted five weeks to the holidays, but the boys were dismissed, and returned to their respective homes.

CHAPTER VII.

When Aleck and Harry had been at home a short time it became necessary for them to decide as to what they were to do in the future.

Harry wished to become a lawyer, and to go into business with his father.

He was, accordingly, sent to Harvard University, where he studied law, graduated, and was admitted to practice.

Aleck wanted to enter upon a mercantile life; to go to a large city, and get a position in some merchant's office, where he would have a good chance of improving himself.

Lawyer Small had offered to secure Aleck such a place with a friend of his in Augusta, and Annie Hormby had consented to it, thanking Mr. Small for his kindness. But Ned strenuously objected to this, and said Aleck would have to help him on the boat.

Aleck was sorely disappointed about this; his ambition was to become something better than a fisherman, but he had to submit.

Annie also was grieved regarding it.

Still there was some consolation to Aleck; he would be near his mother and Nellie Small, whom he had begun to love dearly.

They were now frequently together; walking in the fields, gathering wild flowers in the woods, or sitting on some rock or fallen tree overlooking the blue waves. Aleck had informed his mother of his affection for Nellie; but Annie's keen motherly eyes had already noticed this, and the revelation was no news to her; still, she received his confession with maternal tenderness. At the same time she gave him a caution as to the difficulties he would probably meet with; for much as Mr. Small respected Aleck, she thought he would object to him as a son-in-law on account of their different positions in life.

Aleck, however, was young, and hoped by industry to raise himself to some position worthy of her.

Miss Nellie Small was certainly the prettiest girl in Darnley, and the belle of the village; she had black hair, dark eyes, a lovely complexion, with a tall figure fit for a queen, and as faultless as the Venus of Phidias.

She had loved Aleck ever since he had rescued her from her perilous position on the rock; and

looked upon him as one that was inseparably connected with her parents and herself. Of his belonging to any one else, the idea had never entered her thoughts.

It was a lovely Sunday evening in early September; the day had been bright and warm, but now a gentle breeze came in from the ocean.

Aleck and Nellie had partaken of an early supper and were now enjoying a walk in the autumn fields. The wheat, barley and oats were in the sheaf, the cattle lay in the pastures, while all nature seemed to rejoice in the calm rest of the Sabbath.

As the two returned home in the twilight they stopped to rest and enjoy each other's company a little longer in the village churchyard.

They sat down upon the grass, close to a grave upon which was a small wooden cross. It was fast rotting away, the last reminder left of the wreck of 1861.

The cross was upon the grave of Aleck's mother, who, like the cross, was quietly crumbling away.

"I have been told that you were rescued from the same wreck; also that this same lady held you in her arms, and that the probability is she was your mother," said Nellie.

"I have heard the same story," replied Aleck; "but I do not place much faith in it, for I have asked my mother and the school teacher about it.

"Mr. Bentley told me not to take any notice of these reports, and my mother informed me it was all nonsense, and bade me not to take any heed of such stories in future; I think I shall speak to your father some time on the subject." The conversation had a saddening effect on the two and they left the churchyard.

Aleck saw Nellie safely home, and then returned to his own abode. On entering, he noticed that Ned Hormby was in his working clothes and had probably been out in the boat. Ned growled something about some people being too religious, or rather too lazy to work Sundays; just in the busiest part of the year when the fish were coming in shoals into the bay.

Aleck saw at once that Ned had been imbibing too freely of his own apple-jack, that he was in a quarrelsome mood, and discreetly retired.

There have been ugly rumors about in Darnley for some time now, implying that Ned Hormby was doing something else besides fishing, and that the Mermaid is used for other purposes as well as trawling.

A few months before there had come to the

village, from no one knew where, though they tried hard to find out, a man named Dick Atkins, with his wife.

He said he came from Kentucky.

How he got his living was a mystery to the good people of Darnley; but he was always plentifully supplied with money.

Ned Hormby and this man Atkins soon got acquainted, for this seemed to be Atkins' mission in coming to the place. The two men spent a great part of their time in the village saloons, and were frequently under the influence of liquor.

Ned Hormby in his cups was of a quarrelsome disposition; ugly in temper, and he would sooner fight than eat when in them; the men in the village knew this, some of them from experience, and gave him a wide berth at these times.

Since Ned had taken to drinking, Aleck had done most part of the work with the Mermaid, but he persistently refused to work Sundays.

Ned Hormby and Atkins are now frequently absent from home days at a time; sometimes on the boat alone—for when Atkins is there it is noticed that Hormby will allow no one else on board—at other times no one knew where; but it is remarked that when the two are out alone on the boat they return with very few or no fish;

when they are absent on shore Aleck has charge of the boat, and is now the main support of the family. Whenever the two returned to Darnley on land they would bring large quantities of golden rod, or some other plant with them to stop the village people from talking, allay suspicion, and make people think they were passing their time in the woods.

Which they were; for not far distant, in a secluded glen, if you had the curiosity to follow them, you would have seen the two enter an old deserted shanty or log cabin, long since left by the squatter who had formerly lived there.

Close to this cabin was a spring of clear, sparkling water. Before the two had been long in the cabin you would notice smoke emerging from the chimney. If you kept up your vigil you would see the two men carrying water and fuel into the place, at the same time keeping a sharp lookout for intruders.

Take a glance through the chinks in its dilapidated, half rotten walls and you would perceive bags of corn laid around, a still, mash tubs and worm; also small kegs or barrels filled with "wild cat" whiskey.

Dick Atkins had been engaged in this work in the Kentucky mountains, but the revenue officers

had made it too warm for him there and he had cleared out. He was an old hand at manufacturing "corn licker," and on the kegs or barrels in which this liquor was placed no government stamp was ever pasted.

These barrels of whiskey are rolled or carried down to the seashore in the dark and placed on board the Mermaid; then they are sold by Ned and Atkins to saloonkeepers far away, both up and down the coast of Maine.

The revenue officers got information from neighbors regarding this still, and resolved to make a raid upon the place.

They entered the cabin during the absence of the two men, on a dark and stormy night, saw the evidences of "moonshining" around, then they laid in wait for the return of Ned and Atkins, hoping to capture their game red handed.

Nellie's dog Rover had for some time now been a frequent visitor on board the Mermaid; at first these visits were paid to Aleck, but lately Rover has seemed to be perfectly indifferent as to whether he was in company with Aleck or Ned, providing he could get on board the Mermaid and enjoy his sail. He is now on board the boat as she returns from her trip with Ned and Atkins, who

have just disposed of their stock of illicitly distilled whiskey.

As they stepped off the boat and began to climb the mountainous road leading to the still the storm burst upon them. The road was a bad one at its best, and they looked around on every side in fear. Immense branches were shivered from the trees; the long grass was bowed to the earth; the rain fell in torrents, and the tall trees, like the men, bowed before the blast; the sluices of the mountains were filled, and innumerable torrents rushed down the before empty gullies.

Then in a moment all was hushed.

Dead silence succeeded the roar of the thunder and wind.

Nothing was heard save the splash of the agitated ocean, as it beat up against the black cliffs which girdled it.

For an instant the two men dashed madly forward; both men and beast were blinded and stifled by the gushing rain, and gasping for breath.

There was no shelter around.

As they drew nearer to the hut the dog Rover began to show signs of uneasiness; he turned suddenly towards the place where the revenue officers were concealed, at the same time uttering a low growl.

This caused the men to halt and look carefully around.

But they could see nothing that appeared suspicious; and the dog, after a moment's pause, appeared satisfied and trotted on again.

"Some wild animal, probably," said Ned to Atkins as they entered the hut.

Keeping as much under cover as possible the officers cautiously and silently drew towards the cabin in order to prevent the two men escaping. But long before the watchers were close enough the dog heard them, gave the alarm, and the two men escaped.

The revenue officers kept a close watch on the place for several days, hoping the two men would return to their work in the still, or try to move their goods away. But all their watching was futile. Atkins had had considerable experience with revenue officers before, and as he remarked to Hormby, "The jig was up, and it was no use running their necks into a halter for the sake of the old kettles and pans."

At last the officers, tired of waiting and now feeling sure the "moonshiners" would never return for their property, they commenced the usual destruction of the barrels of mash, the still

itself, with the vessels used for distilling, and then left the vicinity.

It would have gone hard with the informers if Ned Hormby or Atkins had found them out, for they were both desperate men when under the influence of liquor, which was pretty often, as it was always with them; they would in all probability have received something different to the reward paid by the government for information respecting these places.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ned and Atkins "laid on their oars," as they expressed it, for several weeks after this, going out in the boat occasionally fishing, but spending the major part of their time in the village saloons.

One day Atkins proposed to Ned to transfer their distilling operations on board the Mermaid.

Hormby pondered for some time over Atkins' proposition and then burst out into a laugh. "Your plan might work all right in the Kentucky mountains," replied he, "supposing we could transfer the Mermaid up there; but you ought to know that there is a vast difference between the people there and here by this time. There they wink at and screen such work, but here we should be 'blown on' in a very short time. You must have observed while living here the propensity of the inhabitants of Darnley to criticise the actions of every one else in the village. How everybody in the place generously lays aside all their own business to attend to that of their neighbors. How they all imagine they are amateur detectives,

their object being to find out all the secrets of every stranger who settles within their gates, and to keep the rest of the village posted with all their news respecting them.

“These busybodies have been inquiring into your antecedents ever since you came to Darnley, and have manufactured or found out all kinds of stains upon your character, which you are endeavoring to conceal; but in spite of all your precautions these social news gatherers are determined to sift your past life to the bottom, putting all its dark spots before the admiring people of the place.

“Since the revenue officers destroyed our old place you may safely assert that no two men in the whole country have been kept under a stricter surveillance than we have. We could not get the still and other implements needed on board the Mermaid without every one in Darnley knowing of it; besides, if one single person saw us all the rest would have the information the same day; then, again, how are we to get our corn, water and other supplies on board unseen? No, I do not think your plan regarding using the Mermaid for such a purpose practicable.

“Again there is another drawback to your proposal—young Aleck—he uses the boat a great

deal more than we do now, and although he might not turn informer—hem (turning on his heel)—no, your plan is not feasible.”

On the morning following this conversation—which happened to be Sunday—the two men Hormby and Atkins, met early at one of the village saloons.

After partaking freely of liquor during the early part of the day, the two men in the afternoon repaired on board the Mermaid to sleep off the effects of their potations, taking another plentiful supply of whiskey in a bottle with them.

The vessel rode at anchor out in the bay.

When they awoke it was after sundown, and both of them were suffering from the effects of their morning debauch.

Hormby had begun to dislike Atkins, especially when sober, and tried sometimes to shake him off, but Atkins was one whom it was hard to get rid of; he clung closely to Hormby from morning to night, continually tempting him to drink.

After the two had again partaken freely of the whiskey which they had brought on board, or “taken a hair from the dog that bit them in the morning,” as Atkins expressed it, they entered into conversation again about “whiskey spinning.” Hormby remarked: “I know of a cave

some two miles away from here, down on the coast, which is close to the seashore, where I think we might pursue our operations free from interruption. It is situated in a large ravine running from the shore to the top of a hill, and I do not think any other person living knows of its existence. I found it accidentally when I was a boy, and have never visited the place since."

"Well, what do you say to our going to take a look at it now?" said Atkins.

"All right," replied Hormby, "I am willing."

They accordingly pulled up the anchor and set sail for the place.

It was a lovely night, with a bright, full moon, which at times was obscured for a few minutes by the passage of dark clouds over the canopy.

There was very little wind, however, while all around was in a deathly stillness.

The air was pure and light, and the slightest noise could have been heard a long distance in such a place.

When the Mermaid reached her destination the two men jumped on shore and proceeded up the ravine to examine the cave. It was situated on a rocky promontory, was sufficiently large for all they required, and had probably been the lair of some large wild animal, for all around were

scattered bones and skeletons long ago bleached white.

The mouth of the cave was small and almost covered by vines, which hung from above; while inside all was as dark as pitch.

It was just the place for their purpose.

Water, pure, sparkling water, dripped from the rocks at the further end of the cavern, filling a large cavity in the ground to overflowing, then trickling along the cave, down the side of the ravine.

Early the following morning the two men were at the cave again, with lamps in their possession; the place was quickly cleaned out, and once more Atkins set to work manufacturing his home-made mash tub, worms, etc.

During all this time, in fact ever since the coming of Atkins to the village, Ned Hormby had grown more brutal in his treatment of his wife and Aleck at home; it had now become almost impossible to live with him. Annie would frequently beg of Ned to drop the acquaintance of Atkins, let whiskey making alone, and return to his former method of gaining a livelihood, but all to no purpose.

Aleck was sorely tried, too, and frequently had to put up with abuse and even blows when

Hormby was under the influence of liquor. He would have left Darnley long before this if his mother and Nellie Small had not been so closely entwined in his affections. He frequently confided his troubles to Lawyer Small, and that gentleman strongly urged him to leave the Hormby's and go to one of the large cities, where he could start in life on his own account.

Hormby and Atkins used the Mermaid almost exclusively now, which left Aleck with a vast amount of spare time on his hands.

This time he spent in attending to the garden, in reading, and reviewing the work he had done in school, or in working for other fishermen in the village when he could get anything to work at.

Lawyer Small possessed a fine library, which he allowed Aleck to use just as much as he wished to. This helped Aleck to pass away his leisure hours, but he was terribly disappointed as day after day passed away and he growing fast into manhood, with no settled purpose or occupation in life.

It was now pretty well known in Darnley how Hormby and Atkins were passing their time, and what they were doing.

They had as yet always been successful in evad-

ing the revenue authorities, and as their business increased they grew bolder.

Hormby frequently tried to persuade Aleck to join them in their nefarious work, telling him that he could make far more money that way than in their old woman's work of fishing. This made Aleck's position extremely perplexing. To his parents, as he considered Ned Hormby and Annie, he owed everything. He would have done anything in his power to please Ned, providing it was lawful and right; but he well understood the kind of work they were engaged upon, also, that sooner or later they would be caught.

CHAPTER IX.

Lawyer Small's house was the largest and best looking one in Darnley.

It was approached by a double flight of steps, while its fancy balconies, stained windows and Grecian cornice gave a stately air to the building. But if the outer appearance of the house was noble and imposing, it was within one of the richest and best finished houses in Maine.

The hall was a spacious one, dotted here and there with tables, upon which were bronze statuettes, French porcelain, Chinese fans, etc., while upon the wall hung pictures from some of the best painters.

On the left side of this hall opened a suite of drawing rooms, to the right was the dining room, while behind was the kitchen and servants' quarters.

It was a lovely evening, with all the freshness of spring, all the brightness of summer.

There had been cold winds all through the month of April, and May was backward and bash-

ful. The woods had worn their wintry russet longer than usual, but now all on a sudden, like the unfolding of a scene on a stage, the trees were bursting into leaf.

Still the mornings and evenings were cool.

At one end of the dining room on this raw Sunday evening in early May, in the home of the Smalls, there was an enormous wood fire, which cast a ruddy glow around it; in this rosy atmosphere, seated in two capacious arm-chairs, were Mr. and Mrs. Small.

They had just returned from church, where Mr. Small had been somewhat bored by the drowsy service, and particularly long sermon given for the edification of the villagers.

Aleck and Nellie had not yet returned; they were taking their usual evening's walk after the service.

While they were taking this stroll the two elder Smalls got into conversation respecting them.

Mrs. Small started the subject by observing: "I think it is about time that this foolishness between Nellie and Aleck Hormby came to an end. It has been going on for some years now; no good can come of it, and the longer we delay putting a stop to it the harder it will make it for them to bear."

Mr. Small seems loth to answer.

But after some hesitation he says: "I know you are right, my dear, to a certain extent. I know also that you are a woman who never does things by halves, being impetuous sometimes in your ways; therefore, let us talk the matter carefully and calmly over before we decide to do anything. Aleck Hormby is a fine fellow, and a young man who would make his mark in the world if he would only sever his connections with the Hormby family and go out to fight the battle of life. Then, again, I am afraid Nellie is deeply in love with him, for she is always ready to take his part, and that proudly, too."

"Well," replied Mrs. Small, "love or no love, there are really limits to everything; I think just as much of Aleck Hormby as you do, and perhaps more, but all the people in the vicinity are mixing Nellie's name with theirs now, and saying she associates with a family of vagabonds."

"I am afraid you are disposed to be a little too severe on our neighbors, the Hormbys," remarked Mr. Small, in a conciliatory manner.

"But what can we do?"

"We can never keep the two apart in a small place like this, besides, if Nellie knew our object in trying to do so it would only make her more

determined. What do you say to our paying a visit to Europe for a short time, or do you think we ought to send her to school for a couple of years longer? She needs more education yet, and probably if we sent her away Aleck would leave also before long, and thus bring about a separation quietly."

"I think the latter plan of sending her to school for two years or so would be best," said Mrs. Small, "for, as you say, she needs more schooling, and I do not feel disposed for traveling at present."

When Aleck and Nellie returned from their walk they bid each other good-night, and then Nellie, humming the air of a popular love song, bounded lightly up the front steps and entered the hall.

In a few minutes, after taking off her wraps, she hears her father calling her into the dining room. As she enters he motions her to a seat between him and her mother, saying: "Take a seat, my dear."

It was pleasant to see what a ray of sunshine Nellie brought with her into their home. Everyone in the whole house, even to the dog Rover, seemed to bask in her sunny ways and smiles. "Well, what is the matter now, old dad?" she said,

as she put her arms around her father's neck and kissed him.

"Your mother and I have just had a serious conversation," replied her father, "about which you were the subject."

"Indeed, I am very lucky," she said, "in having parents who take such an interest in my welfare; won't you please enlighten me as to the nature of the conversation? for I am sure it must have been very interesting with such a subject as myself for its cause."

"Will you drop your jesting, Nellie, please?" replied her father.

"The subject your mother and I have been conversing upon is about your education. We both of us think it will be of great benefit to you if you are sent to a good school for a year or two to complete your studies."

"Do you really mean that?" asked Nellie.

Then she stopped and pondered for a few moments, gazing full into her father's face. "I am very glad you are of that opinion and am perfectly willing to go."

"Have you decided upon any place and when I am to depart?" asked she.

"No, not yet," replied her father, "there is no hurry about the matter. I will begin to look

around for a suitable place, and we can make our decision in a week or two."

"All right, papa, dear," said Nellie; then kissing her father and mother, and bidding them "good-night," she retired to rest.

A few evenings after this Aleck and Nellie met on the beach in the evening twilight; there was not a single person on the water, on the beach or on the cliffs above them. It was a perfect night, full with the sweet breath of spring, while the sea breeze brought a pleasant taste of the ocean to their lips as the waves rippled and murmured at their feet.

Aleck noticed at once when they met that something was the matter with Nellie, and said: "How serious you are to-night."

Nellie hesitated a little, then she answered: "Yes, I am, I have cause to be serious."

Aleck, feeling alarmed, asked: "What is the matter, Nellie, dear?"

Then Nellie's pent-up feelings gave way as she sobbingly told him of the impending separation. For some moments after this the hearts of both were so agitated that neither of them gave utterance to their thoughts.

Nellie was first in resuming the subject.

"I know that their object in sending me away is

only to part us; if my parents think I need more education, why did they not send me away years ago, when you and Harry were at school in Bangor?" Once more Nellie broke down, while Aleck, putting his arms around her and drawing her head upon his breast, tried to soothe her with kind words of love.

"Do you know when you are going to leave?" presently asked Aleck.

"Not positively," replied Nellie, "but I fancy it will be in a week from Monday; papa is making the arrangements as quickly as possible."

"Well there is some comfort left us anyway," replied Aleck; "we shall have the pleasure of each other's company for nearly two weeks yet."

Nellie's sunny temperament soon asserted itself again, and then the two, hand in hand, went strolling along the beach together.

They had not proceeded very far before Aleck proposed a sail.

"There is your father's boat lying just out of the reach of the waves; shall I launch her, and we can spend an hour or two on the water once more?" asked he.

"All right," said Nellie; "God alone knows when we may have another chance."

Saying which she got into the boat; then Aleck

gave it a strong push, jumped in after her, and they were soon gliding out upon the water.

Nellie took hold of the rudder ropes, while Aleck began to haul up the sail. Soon they caught the breeze and were skimming swiftly out of the bay. Their sorrows are now forgotten, as sitting side by side, locked in each other's embrace, they renew their vows of fidelity to each other. Then they were silent for a time; there was no need for words, and, in fact, their lips were employed in a more pleasant occupation.

Their boat was now swiftly passing the headland of the bay out into the open ocean, and in a short time there was nothing to be seen but the boundless blue sea in front of them, while far behind, like a mass of clouds, the cliffs of Darnley were just discernible.

The ruddy moon was now slowly rising out of the water, illuminating all around with its gentle beams.

Suddenly a large boat passed close to them, when Aleck exclaimed: "That is the Mermaid; she is going somewhere with a cargo of whiskey, I am sure."

As Aleck spoke the Mermaid crossed them, skimming the water like a bird.

Then Nellie said "Yes, it is the Mermaid, and

look there, they have Rover aboard with them, too."

She involuntarily called: "Rover! Rover!"

The dog, on hearing Nellie's voice, jumped into the water and began to swim for their boat.

Aleck slackened sail, and soon Rover, all dripping with water, was taken into the boat.

Nellie gave the dog a good scolding, and he seemed to realize that he had been caught in bad company, as he crouched and grovelled at her feet. He was soon up again, however, shaking himself and in the prow of the boat, where he stood barking at the fast disappearing Mermaid.

Presently Nellie said: "I think we had better return now, Aleck, for it is getting late, and father and mother will be uneasy if I stay out much longer." Aleck changed their course for home, then took a seat beside Nellie, kissing her and asking her if she was happy.

"Very, very happy," replied Nellie.

"Let us be happy and satisfied for the time being, for there are no doubt times coming when we can not be so." Aleck, feeling that Nellie was getting a little despondent, again pressed her to his breast, while with kind words of comfort he tried to console her. A short time of intense happiness passed, and then they struck the shore.

Rover immediately bounded on to the beach, while Nellie quickly followed.

Aleck pulled up the boat, made her fast, and the three departed on their journey homewards.

On the Saturday evening previous to the Monday on which it had been decided that Nellie should take her departure for school, a lawn party and ball were given by her parents at their home in her honor.

Meanwhile during the interim her father had made all arrangements for her attending a young ladies' seminary at Germantown, Philadelphia. Aleck dressed himself that evening for the party with great care. When he arrived at the residence of the Smalls most of the guests were already assembled.

A joyous throng was gathered in the hall.

Men's deep voices and ladies' silvery accents blended well together, while light footsteps were tripping up and down the staircase or wandering from room to room. Presently all the guests were gathered together on the lawn, where, for a short time, they stood grouped in parties chatting merrily. Then they all entered the ball room, where the first quadrille was soon started.

Aleck and Nellie danced several times together that night, in fact rather oftener than the youths

of Darnley liked to see. They both danced well, and as they swept around the room were greatly admired. After one of these dances, the room being extremely hot, many of the party deserted it, strolling out on the lawn, in the garden, or down the lane; and both Aleck and Nellie were among the deserters.

When the evening was far advanced, and the ball was drawing to a close, the two once more stole away from the company, retiring to a large chestnut tree close by, where they could converse without fear of being interrupted. Nellie was very quiet, solemn, in fact, for as the time for the separation drew nearer she seemed to feel more despondent, and with difficulty kept back her tears.

When the company began to disperse they walked back in silence to the house; their hearts were both full, and they had nothing to say. Then came the time for parting, when Aleck, having bid the elder Smalls good night, embraced Nellie and departed.

On the following day they met once more at church, took their last stroll afterwards, and then came the morning for Nellie's departure for school.

She was up very early, in fact long before the rest of the family.

Having arranged her hair, and dressed herself in a light summer dress, it still wanted close upon two hours to breakfast time. It was a brilliant morning when she ran down into the hall and through the glass doors which led to the lawn. There was a fresh and fragrant breeze coming in from the ocean; the birds were singing merrily in the trees, as if inviting her to partake in their jubilee; in fact all nature seemed to be happy and gladsome.

Presently she heard her mother calling, "Nellie, will you please come in to breakfast."

She ate very little, and left the table as soon as possible, hastening up stairs to finish packing her trunk.

Having completed this task she began to walk around the room, when she was joined by her father, who came to give her a little advice, also the money for her traveling expenses, and to bid her good-bye.

It now wanted but half an hour to the time for the train to leave Darnley.

Her trunk had just been carried to the depot; she took a few mouthfuls of bread and milk and then went to her mother's room to bid her good-

bye. Nellie clung to her mother's neck for a few moments, half smothering her with kisses; then her mother said: "Good-bye, dear; mind you take good care of yourself and learn all you can while you are away."

Then came the parting with Aleck, who was with her to the last; this was the most painful and bitter of all, but like everything else in this transitory life it came to an end, and Nellie was for the first time in her life whirled away to remote and unknown parts.

A few days after Nellie left Darnley Mr. Bentley, the school teacher, was compelled to leave Darnley also.

His father had died in New York suddenly, leaving his son comfortably well off. Mr. Bentley, Jr., intended remaining in New York permanently, after the funeral of his father was over, so the school board of Darnley had to cast about for a new teacher. Not being able to find a suitable person on such a short notice, Aleck Hormby was asked to take charge of the school for the remainder of the year, and consented to do so.

Thus for a short time Aleck's life passes on; he has the village children around him each day, doing his best to instill into their minds such geography, arithmetic, history, grammar, etc., as

the village curriculum calls for, and trying to the best of his ability to tread in the footsteps of his worthy predecessor.

But is he satisfied with his present life?

Let us pay him a visit and see.

It is evening.

He has just dismissed his school, and is sitting alone at his desk. It has been a sultry June day, with an oppressive, hot breeze from the west. Does he look happy, or even content?

No; he feels more desolate than ever since Nellie left, and determines as soon as the school year is over to break, if possible, the chains which bind him to Darnley. He now longs to get out into the busy world, and away from this drudgery of teaching dull and careless children writing and ciphering. He, for the time, forgets his own school days, also that when he got a vast deal older than these children how difficult it was to him to keep his attention on his studies on a deadly summer day like this has been. A day with scorching heat, and gusts of hot air that tormented the life out of the little ones, and also took away all their energy.

But at last the day is over, night is drawing nigh, and having brought his eventide musings to a close he rises from his seat, locks the school-

house door after him and is soon out in the harvest field, busy among the mowers, where for a time he forgets his troubles, the galling bondage and soreness from which he wishes to be cut asunder.

CHAPTER X.

We must now return to Ned Hormby and Atkins, who are still at their old business of whiskey manufacturing. They have had a busy morning, filling up numerous kegs of liquor, which they intend transporting to the Mermaid previous to their delivery that night. When their work was finished Atkins proposed a visit to the village, so that they could imbibe a different brand of liquor.

Ned Hormby consenting, the two started for Darnley at once; on arriving at the village they entered one of the saloons.

The place was full of loafers.

At one of the tables were a party of four—who proudly termed themselves a quartet—they were trying to stagger or stumble through something about, “Darling, darling, how I love thee,” which they proudly told the company was a “glee.”

At one of the other tables playing cards were another party. The card players were greatly incensed at times at the quartet, frequently telling

them to "shut up, for we can't hear to play cards for your confounded noise."

At another group of tables, which had been pushed together to accommodate their numbers, were a party who styled themselves "The Sons of the White Rose."

These gentlemen were Canadians, who had left Canada and settled in Maine; they were now criticising the actions of the United States Government, and making resolutions for the advancement of United States citizens, which the secretary was ordered to forward to Washington.

When Hormby and Atkins entered the place, however, it stopped all their business.

The United States Government was allowed to run things its own way for a time, as far as "The Sons of the White Rose" were concerned; the party playing cards threw down their hands, while the quartet instantly showed an inclination to transfer their affection from Apollon to Bacchus.

Some of the company requested Ned to "set 'em up," which he frequently did, while others jokingly asked him if he had caught any fish that morning.

To this question Ned replied by saying: "No; we have only been getting the bait ready." The

two stayed here until dusk, and then returned once more to the cave.

The night was fine and starlight, and they got their kegs of liquor quickly and safely aboard the Mermaid, considering the condition they were in. The wind was blowing hard from the north as they put out to sea, and they were soon passing Darnley Bay.

Suddenly, as they rounded the northern point, they perceived a revenue cutter bearing down straight for the Mermaid. The cutter commanded the Mermaid to stop, but Ned Hormby took no notice of the order. Then the cutter fired a gun, but still the Mermaid kept on her course. Once more the cutter fires, and this time with shot, striking dangerously near the Mermaid, and making the white spray dash over their deck. Soon after this the wind changed, turning to a gale, and then the race started in earnest.

The Mermaid was a swift craft, and sailed well, especially in a heavy sea, and it was all the cutter could do to hold her own. It was a stern chase, for both Atkins and Hormby realized their danger; but they both determined to save their liquor, and escape, if possible.

Sometimes they lost sight of the cutter in the

darkness, then again they could distinguish the lights on board.

After a time the wind dropped, and all was still; the Mermaid lay becalmed, while the cutter was quickly steaming on, lessening the distance between the two boats.

Ned Hormby was at the helm of the Mermaid; as the cutter drew nearer he ordered Atkins to sink the kegs of whiskey.

"Heave them overboard as quickly as possible; if we are to lose them, those darned revenue officers shall not have them; neither will they find any evidence against us." Atkins quickly sank the kegs, one after another, and when the cutter came alongside their deck was clear. "Darn you pesky revenue officers," said Atkins, "I guess you thinks you is powerful smart in chasing and shooting at poor fishermen like we." The revenue officers took no notice of his remarks, but at once began to carefully search the Mermaid. Of course they found nothing to incriminate Hormby and Atkins, and had been to all their trouble for nothing. They returned to their own boat, Ned and Atkins laughing jeeringly as they did so.

"You can laugh all you want to, Hormby," said the captain of the revenue boat, "but our day will

come; you have been too smart for us this trip, but—well, never mind, better luck next time.”

“All right; good-bye, Bowles,” said Ned, and so they parted.

The revenue officers had frequently tried to capture the two men at their work in the cave, but all their attempts had so far been fruitless. Ned and Atkins pursued their work there with as much confidence as if they had an army of scouts on the watch for revenue officers.

This is explained by the fact that they had a guard—a careful, watchful guard—in the dog Rover.

Ever since Nellie left Darnley, and Aleck had been engaged in his scholastic duties, Rover had been with them almost constantly.

While the two men were in the cave engaged in their manufacture of “Mountain dew,” the dog sat upon a large boulder outside, keeping a careful watch above and below. If any person appeared in sight in the day time, it brought forth a warning growl, enabling Ned to get his glass upon the stranger and scrutinize him long before he got near to the cave.

But even during the night it was impossible to get anywhere near them without attracting the

dog's notice, and giving the two men ample time to make their escape.

Night has come again; Ned and Atkins are once more rolling their kegs of liquor down the slope in front of the cave, and transferring them to the Mermaid, with the dog Rover trotting in front of them.

Ned Hormby feels despondent somehow to-night; he strongly suspected, and had a premonition, that the revenue officers were on their track. He walked on for a short time, considering the matter in his mind, his face darker than the night, and with a heavy oppression of dread and sorrow weighing upon his mind.

Then Atkins suddenly broke into a laugh, and said: "Why, Ned, you have come away without your hat."

"Yes," replied Ned, "I did it purposely; I am afraid those darned cutter men are on our track again to-night."

Turning to the dog, Ned pointed to his head, and said: "Fetch my hat, Rover." The dog at once started back for the cave, while the two men stood still and listened. They had only a few minutes to wait, when down to them came the deep baying of the dog. Ned's fears were cor-

rect, for the revenue officers were on the watch for them.

They had divided into two parties this night, one-half of the men being already in the cave, waiting to capture Ned and Atkins should they come back for more liquor; the other half being on the revenue cutter.

Rover, when he reached the cave, refused to enter, stopping upon the ledge outside and barking furiously. The men tried to persuade him to come inside, but all to no purpose. Seeing that their efforts were of no use they tried to shoot the dog; then he prudently retired. He at once joined Ned and Atkins, who were now on board the Mermaid and putting out to sea.

While the two men were engaged in getting the Mermaid out, they were closely followed by the cutter.

Rover once more gave the alarm by barking loudly at the cutter, thus showing the two men on board the Mermaid their dangerous position.

"Crowd on all the sail possible," said Ned to Atkins.

The breeze was fresh and the chase became exciting, for the two were both brave and reckless men and had become desperate in their efforts to escape.

Again the barking of the dog was heard on board the cutter, and this time it was nearer and louder. The dog did not seem to realize that, if he was apprising his friends of their danger he was also guiding their enemies, by giving them the clue to their position.

They both ordered Rover to keep quiet, but the dog took no notice of them.

Atkins turned pale with anger; then he bestowed a tremendous kick upon Rover with his heavy-heeled boot which sent the dog tumbling down the cabin stairway. But Rover was not used to this kind of treatment; he bounded up the staircase, growling fiercely as he did so; on gaining the deck he flew at Atkins, seized him by the throat, then throwing him on his back pinned him to the deck.

When Atkins perceived the dog making for him he hastily drew a large clasp knife from his pocket to defend himself with.

"Loose him! Leave go, Rover!" shouted Hormby, to the dog.

But this was no time for Rover to obey; he was engaged in a struggle, and that a struggle for life.

The two fought like demons; Atkins slashing away at Rover with his knife; the dog worrying at Atkins' throat. It was a hard battle; a fierce

struggle; man against beast; finally the two slipped on the smooth, drenched deck, and, sliding backwards, they went overboard, still firmly locked together in their struggle for supremacy.

Several days afterwards their bodies were washed ashore, Rover still having a firm grip on the throat of his enemy, while Atkins' arms were firmly girdled around the dog's body, holding him with an iron grip, the grip of death.

When Ned ordered Rover to loosen his grip on Atkins, and he saw that the dog took no notice of him, he started for the strugglers, intending to choke off the dog, but before Ned could reach them, man and dog had gone overboard.

In less time than it takes to tell it, after Ned left the rudder the Mermaid broached to and fell into the trough of the sea, where she rolled helplessly about like an empty barrel.

Although Ned was terribly distressed at this sudden and unexpected termination of the affair, and greatly excited by the scene he had just witnessed, he turned round and made for the helm.

The cutter was now swiftly closing up with the Mermaid.

As she neared her, she fired one of her guns into the boat, carrying away the main-mast close by the board. The shot glancing off the mast

struck Ned on the knee, thus crippling him also, and he fell on the deck badly wounded.

The Mermaid, now utterly disabled, drifted before the wind, and the cutter came quickly alongside. Several times during the approach of the cutter did those on board her see the fierce struggle between Rover and Atkins, and heard the harsh worrying of the dog, also, another strange sort of sepulchral human noise.

When the men on the cutter began to board the Mermaid, Hormby sprang to his feet to resist them, but he soon sank on deck again, uttering a groan of despair. It was a painful experience for him, this tragic end of their illicit distilling; he had a prosperous business before he made the acquaintance of Atkins; was honored and respected by the people of Darnley, but now he would be a cripple for some time to come, with the prison, also, looking him in the face.

After becoming familiar with Atkins, he had utterly neglected his business, and, dog-in-the-manger-like, had prevented any one else from attending to it.

Aleck could have carried on the business, and would have done so if Hormby would have permitted him, but Ned would not allow this, and everything connected with his occupation as fish-

erman had been going to rack and ruin for some time; besides, his having lost all his customers.

Bitter were his thoughts as the men conveyed him on board the cutter, and then took the disabled Mermaid in tow. The boat was very dear to Ned, and for a time he gazed intently upon her. He had sailed in her for many years, but now they were both crippled and disfigured.

Upon the arrival of the party on shore Hormby was given up to the authorities first and then afterwards transferred to a hospital, where his injuries were attended to.

After Ned's capture and the death of Atkins, the revenue officers once more commenced their usual work of destroying the implements used by the two men in the cave for "stilling."

When Ned had sufficiently recovered from his injuries he was tried for violating the law, in manufacturing and selling "moonshine whiskey"; a heavy penalty was imposed upon him, which he was unable to pay, therefore he was sent to jail, from where, in course of time, he emerged a sadder and a wiser man.

After Ned had been sent to prison, Annie, his wife, had taken up her abode with one of her

brothers, who lived close to Darnley, while Aleck Hormby determined to leave the place.

The term for which he had been engaged as teacher had expired, and it was again vacation.

Having made up his mind with regard to leaving Darnley it did not take him long to make preparations; his few things were soon packed together, and he was ready to depart. Annie Hormby was very despondent at the prospect of their separation. She embraced Aleck tenderly as they parted at the garden gate, and did not return into the house until Aleck was out of sight.

CHAPTER XI.

When Aleck left Darnley he decided to try his fortune in Philadelphia.

On arriving at the ancient city of brotherly love he paid his first visit to Germantown.

Taking a car at the Broad street depot he soon arrived at his destination.

In the midst of large grounds stood a venerable looking brick building, on whose trim gate was a large brass sign, with "Seminary for Young Ladies" engraved thereon.

Entering the grounds, Aleck proceeded to the front door, rang the bell, and then inquired for Miss Nellie Small.

A smart maid servant ushered him into a small parlor, and then announced, "Mr. Aleck Hormby, to visit Miss Small."

Miss Small left the school room and went down into the parlor, the cynosure of all the young ladies' eyes in the establishment.

After the maid had announced Miss Small, she closed the parlor door.

Nellie took a glad, bright look at Aleck, then they both rushed instinctively forward, and were locked in each other's arms in a warm embrace.

"My Nellie," exclaimed Aleck.

"Oh, Aleck! Dear Aleck," said Nellie, "how glad I am to see you."

Then Aleck handed her some presents, which had been sent from home, and also a small locket which he had purchased for her. Nellie's eyes glistened as she examined her presents.

She exclaimed: "Splendid; what beauties; oh, I am so glad."

Aleck replied: "I am also delighted to see you so well pleased with them."

The excitement of their meeting being over, Nellie proceeded to the sanctum of the principal in order to beg leave for a half-day's holiday. The permit being graciously accorded, Nellie and Aleck left the premises to take a walk.

"What direction shall we take, Nellie?" said Aleck.

"Suppose we take a stroll in Fairmount Park?" Nellie replied.

The youthful lovers gladly wended their way, side by side, to that noted Philadelphia resort, taking a light lunch with them. Selecting a sylvan glen, by the side of the rippling Wissahickon

Creek, they sit down under the shade of the tall trees. Here Nellie takes off her gloves and they partake of their lunch with great delight, thinking it a feast fit for the gods.

After doing justice to the lunch they contentedly wander about the park, Nellie giving an account of the school and her companions; how Miss So and So is this, and Miss So and So that; their parties, charades, dances, etc., and how she detests Latin, German, and ancient history.

“What do they want cramming our brains with nonsense about Alexander the Great, Pompey, Darius, Julius Caesar, and a lot of other tiresome persons who lived and died thousands of years ago?” said Nellie, shrugging her shoulders. “I think it would have been far better if some of their actions had been buried with them, instead of having them preserved to confuse our memories; and, besides, I cannot for the life of me see why my parents should have sent me all this distance, and away from home, as well, to learn such stuff.”

“It is certainly a most extraordinary thing,” replied Aleck, “and I think we are both well aware that this was not their motive in sending you here. However, all is well that ends well, and here we are together again, in spite of all obsta-

cles. I suppose you were somewhat surprised at my turning up in Philadelphia so unexpectedly this morning, and perhaps you will think it strange that I selected this city; but somehow or other fate led me here; I wanted to be near you, and where I could see you occasionally."

Thus the hours pass away until it is time for Nellie to return.

"Have you had a pleasant afternoon?" asked Aleck, as they rose from their seats beneath the trees.

"A very, very happy one," replied Nellie.

They now leave the park, and, arm in arm, return along Germantown avenue to the seminary.

It was scarcely nine o'clock when they arrived at the gate, where they stood chatting until a neighboring church clock struck that hour; then Aleck took his departure for the night.

The young ladies of the seminary were on the watch for Nellie's return, whom they quizzed unmercifully when she made her appearance. They vowed that neither she nor they should go to bed until Nellie stood treat, and had quite a merry time before they retired for the night.

Aleck walked along a handsome street for about a mile after leaving Nellie; then turning off

into one of the numerous streets which branched off from this busy thoroughfare he began to look for a place to spend the night.

By this time Aleck had become very tired and wished for rest.

Finally he stopped at a decent-looking house where there was a card in the window with "Rooms to rent" thereon; then knocking at the door he inquired if he could be accommodated for the night.

The lady of the place conducted him into a room at the back of the house, asked him if he needed any refreshments, and being answered in the negative, withdrew.

The other boarders had all evidently retired for the night.

His room was a very comfortable one and nicely furnished. Aleck sank into a rocking chair, thinking over the events of the day, and then retired.

In the morning, after partaking of breakfast at the same place, he went down town with the intention of visiting some of the noted places. His first call was at the State House.

Here the old cracked liberty bell was examined, the relics of by-gone colonial days were carefully gone over; then he took a stroll on Chestnut and

Eighth streets, being somewhat amazed at the magnificence of the stores and places of business he passed thereon.

In the afternoon he visited the Zoological Gardens, which was something new and a great treat to him; and in the evening the lower or city part of Fairmount Park.

He was greatly surprised at the magnificence of all he saw around him. He took a seat on one of the numerous benches placed there for the accommodation of visitors, scanning the gay equipages and merry groups of pedestrians as they passed. After a short rest he noticed quite a crowd of people making for a landing stage, at which in a short time there drew up a small steamer.

Aleck's love for the water soon showed itself, and he at once joined them.

On inquiry he found that the boat plyed on the Schuylkill, between Fairmount Park and Wissahickon. Going on board, the little boat soon cast off, with quite a lot of pleasure seekers on her; then the band began to play as Aleck walked on deck, where he noticed the lovers indulging tenderly in sweet discourse, or partaking freely of lager beer.

When they arrived at Wissahickon the parties

all left the boat and went ashore into a pleasure garden. In this place the ladies and gentlemen seemed for the most part to have the same object in view, but were infinitely less sentimental in its pursuit. Lager beer was again apparently the favorite beverage, with whiskey and cigars a close second.

Aleck found the scenery here delightful; there was also a good band with superb vocalists to listen to, so he stayed, enjoying himself, until quite late.

As the little boat glided back down the lazy Schuylkill the clocks round about struck eleven.

It was a lovely evening.

The soft mellow moonlight shone through the drowsy haze that hung to the river, illuminating the scenery with a rich, golden light, while the gentle western wind, laden with the sweet perfume of the woods, added to their joy and brightness. The air was full with the hum of the many voices and the merry music of laughter.

Aleck again stayed at the same place where he had slept the previous night.

On the following morning he arose early; he had not rested very well.

The mosquitoes had been voracious during the darkness, and at daylight the flies were almost as

bad, giving him no peace; so at last he decided to leave them in full possession of the room.

He took breakfast at a restaurant close by, and then walked on towards Market street, where he had decided to commence his work in search of employment.

He had not proceeded very far before he was accosted by a rather shabby-looking young man, who asked him for sufficient funds to procure a breakfast.

The stranger started out with the usual rigma-role used by such mendicants, in saying that he had not had anything to eat for several days. Aleck, who was unsophisticated, and as yet rather green in city ways, said to himself: "Why, bless me, the man must be starving."

He at once replied: "Come along with me and I will see that you have something to eat."

They soon after came to another restaurant, where, when Aleck desired the stranger to take his breakfast, he was somewhat surprised by the fellow refusing to enter the place, and coolly asking him for fifteen cents instead, saying at the same time: "I know where, not far from here, I can get a much better meal for the money."

"All right," said Aleck, "I think I can eat a

little more breakfast myself, and am willing to accompany you there."

The young men then walked a little farther down town.

"Where do you come from?" said Aleck, addressing the stranger, "and how is it that you are in your present difficulty?" The fellow named a distant town, and then informed Aleck that he had only been released from the penitentiary a few days previously.

"What is your business, or occupation, and why were you sent there?" asked Aleck.

By this time they had arrived at a building, on the outside of which was a sign with "Warm lunch, day and night" painted thereon.

The stranger said: "Come along; here is the place."

On entering, he at once ordered two lunches and two beers.

Aleck was a little taken by surprise at his companion's coolness, but the latter remarked: "Oh, never mind, we'll get two lunches here, and you get one beer to my two for your fifteen cents."

Aleck mused for a short time as his companion devoured his lunch and drank his beer.

"Well," thought he, "it is too early for me to go around yet, the places of business will not be

open for some time, and I may as well learn what I can about this vagabond; perhaps I shall get the value of my fifteen cents."

When the beggar had finished his lunch and beer he was very profuse in his thanks to Aleck, pouring forth blessings without number, and with a sort of smile on his face, said to Aleck: "Let me see, you wanted to know a little of my history, and why I was sent to the penitentiary. But, stranger, talking is mighty dry work, so please make it another beer before I start."

"All right," said Aleck, "your story must be an interesting one and worth another nickel at least, so get another glass of beer."

CHAPTER XII.

"It is a most extraordinary thing that you should wish me to tell you my history," began the young man, "for although I have often heard it recounted in other places, this is the first time any one has wished me to give my own version of the affair.

"My name they used to tell me when I was a boy was George Smith. But who gave me that name I do not remember; though I am pretty sure it was not my godfather and godmother in my baptism.

"I was born somewhere in England, but the exact place is not chronicled in any English history.

"The first thing I can remember is a circus, in which, I think, my father and mother were both performers. My parents both partook freely of the flowing bowl, so freely in fact that at an early date in my history they left me an orphan.

"I am sure you will agree with me that this was not a very enviable position to be left in.

“The other members of the company, however, took compassion on me, and my earliest recollections are of the sawdust ring.

“My youthful companions all developed themselves as experts in dancing upon rolling casks, bare-back riding, jumping through rings, catching knives and balls, walking the tight rope, or something else which pleased the public, and filled the exchequer of the owner. They were all mighty clever and knowing in their way, and although not over clean and tidy in private life, still, no doubt, did the best they could under the circumstances.

“We traveled about from place to place in caravans, and my endowments consisted chiefly in having an enormous appetite and a general hatred for work of any kind.

“One night, after performing at one of the towns in the county of Lancashire, where I had covered myself with ignominy and drawn forth the censure of the owner and ring manager several times during the performance, I heard the owner say: ‘D—n that boy, we shall have to get rid of him.’

“So I suppose they settled the matter that way, for the day following, when we stopped on the roadside to partake of our mid-day meal, which

was eaten in gypsy fashion, the manager threw a plate over the hedge, at the same time ordering me to crawl through and fetch it; while I was doing this the party drove off at full speed.

"Having found the plate I quickly crawled back through the hedge and shouted for the company to wait for me, but they took no notice of my entreaties, and only drove away the faster.

"Thus, at the tender age of eleven years, I was thrown upon my own resources; my only fortune a plate, and that with nothing to eat thereon.

"I ran as far as I could after them, and then sat down by the roadside to rest.

"I cried until I fell asleep.

"On awakening I took a look around me. Vast moors stretched out on every hand, east, west, north, south. There were large mountains in the distance, but not a sign of house or habitation in sight. I struck out on the road, following the direction in which the caravans had gone.

"Night came on, and as it grew dark I found I was hopelessly lost and in close proximity to a large body of water. I waded into it over my shoe tops before I was aware of it, and then had sense enough to turn around. Toiling back to the top of the hill, I climbed a wall and then narrowly escaped dropping into a deserted stone

quarry. Following the safe side of the wall in an opposite direction to the water and quarry I soon found myself wading knee deep in the mountain heather. Coming to a large boulder I lay down, put the plate which I had carried with me down beside me, and, covering myself with the heather, was soon fast asleep. I wakened several times during the night and perceived the stars twinkling above me. The heather was dry and still warm, for it was in summer.

“Worn out with my wanderings of the previous day, it was broad daylight when I finally awoke. Picking a lot of blackberries for breakfast I again continued my journey.

“As the day advanced it became terribly hot, while the spreading moors were still around me. I walked for a long time, and was almost overpowered with fatigue when, in the distance in the valley, I saw a large, red brick house.

“Then a farmer in his wagon drove quickly past; while in the pastures around me were cows and sheep.

“I was quite as hungry and thirsty as I was this morning when I met you.

“Struggling on I soon came to the grounds of the house. Opening a gate I saw an elderly gentleman walking around, accompanied by a large

mastiff. The dog came bounding towards me, evincing a desire to make a meal of me, but was called off by his master.

"The old bloke then gruffly asked me what I wanted around there; and when I told him that I was almost famished and wished he would give me something to eat he sternly bade me begone, as he wanted no young vagabonds around his premises, at the same time saying, 'If I was not quick about it his dog should make short work of me.'

"I needed no further instructions, but quickly decamped.

"I once more set out on my travels. I walked a great distance, and then heard a clock strike twelve; turning in the direction of the sound I saw a village school. The road upon which I had been traveling now joined the main road. Human life and human voices were near, so I struggled on. As I walked on the road during the morning I cut a stout stick from one of the hedges to help me on my way. I now thought if people will not give me something to eat I must endeavor to see what my accomplishments will produce.

"Sharpening my stick to a point I walked on to the bottom of the lane, where a lot of youngsters about my own age were rushing pell mell from

the village school. Balancing my plate upon the top of the stick I soon had it spinning around, then throwing it in the air caught it again, surprising them with my performance. One of the boys asked me to go home with him to display my ability to his father. Conducting me to a neighboring ale house, I went through the same performance for the edification of the boy's father and a few of his drunken cronies. This gave me, however, what I much needed, my dinner, from the owner, also a few stray coppers from his customers.

"I inquired for my companions as I passed through the village, but could discover no trace of them. I rambled on again for a few hours, my feet paining me terribly; then turning off from the high road I entered a field and laid down under a hedge to sleep. Before long I was up again and on my way.

"Passing through another village as night came on I purchased some bread and cheese with my coppers, and once more made my bed on the heath. But my rest this night was broken; the air was chilly, the ground damp; then a thunderstorm came on, the rain descended in torrents, and I was drenched to the skin. I moved about

several times in the darkness, but was compelled to lie down again on the wet grass.

“It rained all the following day.

“After walking most part of the day in my wet clothing I felt as if my strength was failing me, and that I could not go much farther. The pangs of hunger were painful, and as I dragged my wearied, blistered feet along I was afraid I should sink on the cold, saturated ground and die.

“At last I dropped down thoroughly exhausted.

“Covering my face with my hands I shut out the dreadful sight. Soon, however, I was up on my feet again, for I was too terror stricken to lie still. As it grew dusk the wind fell, the rain passed over, and in the distance I perceived a light.

“Crawling on towards it I found it to be from a farm house.

“Peeping through the window I saw several persons in the kitchen sitting around the hearth before the dull red glow of a wood fire. I was too much afraid, after my previous experience with the gentleman and dog, to knock for admission, so I climbed to the top of one of the hay stacks and slept.

“Here, covering myself with the hay, I was at last dry and warm.

“When the day broke I stole out from my place

of concealment, and once more took to the wet, toilsome, country road.

"I had not gone very far before I found I was again lost; for the road ended in a marsh, which it was impossible for me to cross. Not caring now in what direction I went I struck across the fields, climbing over walls and through hedges.

"Once more gaining the road I tramped along until a farmer, seated in his wagon, overtook me.

"Stopping his horse he looked earnestly at me and then asked me where I was going. I answered anywhere.

" 'Oh, that's a queer place,' said the farmer. 'G'e it a name, an' I will tak' thee theer if it is on my way,' Then taking me by the hand he said: 'Jump up, youngster.'

"This was a great help to me, for I was so fatigued that I could scarcely walk. He then began to question me, and I gave him a short account of my destitute circumstances.

"We shortly afterwards arrived at a small market town, where the farmer having finished his business, we both partook of a good dinner.

"He then proposed that I should return home with him and help on the farm. To this proposition I gladly consented; so we then took our departure. The sun was setting when we reached

the farm. Giving me some clean underwear, and a suit of clothing belonging to one of his boys, he sent me to take a bath, burnt my old clothing, gave me my supper, then sent me to bed.

“The following morning the household were all astir by four o’clock. After breakfast the farmer took me into the garden, telling me that, owing to the condition of my feet, he would give me an easy job that day. He then pulled up some weeds and told me to do the same for a time. I set to work, and when he came at noon to see what progress I had made I had a large pile of them ready for inspection. Unfortunately, however, in my ignorance I had pulled up as many valuable plants as weeds, which made the farmer furious. Calling his wife, he showed her my skill in weeding, and then asked her to show me how to feed the pigs, poultry and cattle.

“We then sat down to dinner, where I gorged myself to the full.

“Then taking me to a barn the farmer showed me how to operate a straw cutter, and told me to cut some for the cattle. After he had gone I felt drowsy, and thought what a nice place the straw would make for taking a nap on. So down I went into it, and when the farmer returned, some two

hours after, he found me fast asleep in the straw, with very little of it cut.

“On the following day it was the same.

“He gave me some work after dinner, cautioning me not to fall asleep. I promised not to do so, but my drowsiness again mastered me. When I awoke the farmer, his wife, the servants and all the farm help were standing over me laughing. The farmer pulled me out of the straw, set me on my feet, and gave me a good shaking. Then calling me a lazy dog, not worth my salt, he gave me a shilling and bade me begone.

“I was very glad when he gave me the shilling, as I preferred it far more than I did his work.

“I took my supper, and slept at a roadside tavern that night.

“I awoke early the next morning, for during the whole night I had been restless, dreaming of the occurrences of the previous day. It was just daylight as I went down stairs. I wondered how I could procure my breakfast.

“Opening the door of one of the rooms to see if I could find anything to eat, I was surprised to find a lot of gypsies drinking.

“They must have been at it pretty hard all night, for all but two, and the landlord, were asleep in their chairs. One of these, whom I after-

wards found out to be the chief, called me in and asked me to drink their health, at the same time he handed me a pot of porter.

"Nothing loth, I took a hearty swig, which made the fellow wince.

"He then asked me a few questions, and then said, 'Follow me.'

"Calling his companions by saying, 'Come, boys, it is time we were in camp,' they hurried off, taking me with them.

"After partaking of a good breakfast, consisting of rabbit stew, which a neighboring gentleman had kindly provided us with gratis, we struck our tents and departed.

"My new friends had a Punch and Judy box, a small circus, and other shows, while some of the ladies told fortunes.

"My abilities were soon brought into requisition by these people, and I was soon disporting myself to the music of pan pipes and drum. I stayed with these people several months, until the weather got too cold for camping in tents, and then had to seek fresh pastures.

"Passing through a town one day shortly afterwards a cop hauled me before a magistrate for begging.

"The magistrate asked me what I was doing.

begging, when I courteously asked him if he wished me to steal. 'No, no, my boy,' replied he, 'if you wish to be honest come with me, and I think I can find you employment.'

"The magistrate was an apothecary, owning a drug store in the same town. He at once installed me in his shop as chief bottle washer and delivery boy, also instructing me how to write messages and take charge of the store during his absence. This engagement did not last very long, however, for I made such inroads on the candy department that my master swore I would soon eat him out of house and home

"Being once more cast adrift I wandered to Liverpool, where I soon became acquainted with a boy about my own age, whose name was Tim Holt. Tim and I were firm friends and inseparable companions for several years.

"He was a genius in his way, and an adept at his kind of work. On the first day of our acquaintance he offered to take me as his apprentice. Our work consisted chiefly in selling matches and newspapers, blacking boots, carrying parcels, running errands, or anything else at which we could earn an honest penny.

"Whenever work of this kind became scarce we prowled around the docks, where we used to

find large quantities of brass castings, lead pipe, old iron, carpenters' tools and such articles.

"These we used to sell to the junk dealers, who knew very well how we procured them, but discreetly asked no questions.

"When the police made it too hot for us to stay around the docks any longer we transferred our operations to the crowded streets of the city. Here we found gloves, handkerchiefs, mufflers, tickers, and purses.

"At night we slept in empty barrels, unfinished houses, on the two-penny rope, or in tramps' lodging houses. Sometimes when we were flush in funds we patronized the sailors' homes, where we lived like lords.

"But one day—one day, as the poets say—we came to grief.

"Tim and I were working an old gentleman for his muffler and gloves, which hung conveniently out of his overcoat pockets, when a lady close to us gave the alarm. A burly bobby placed his massive paws on us and marched us off to limbo.

"But say, mate, this is mighty dry work talking; can't I have another glass of beer?

"Ah! All right! Thanks. The clapper works a little easier after it has been oiled.

"The morning following we were taken before

a magistrate, and Tim, being an old offender, was committed to the assizes, where he was sent for five years afterwards on board a training ship to correct his manners, and I have never heard from him since.

“This being my first offense—I mean the first time in which I was caught—the magistrate sentenced me to durance vile for thirty days; at the same time he gave me a good lecture and informed me that if I ever came before him again I should be sent up, too.

“I thanked the beak, assuring him that I did not come to him that time, as I was brought forcibly, and hoped that I should never see his face again.

“On arriving at the place where I had to sojourn for the next thirty days they set me to treading a staircase, and work as hard as I could, and I can assure you I never worked more assiduously in all my life—from early morning to dewy eve I could never reach the top to rest and take a view around me. Tread, tread, tread, all day long, while it seemed to me as if I finished off just where I started, with all my labor in vain.

“Sundays an old cove in a white surplice used to lecture us about amending our sinful lives. I

used to wish the old bloke would mend the painful tone of my stomach.

“When my thirty days of tramping were over, and I was once more at liberty, I was informed that the United States of America was a veritable gold mine to any one possessing my abilities, and I at once determined to cross the pond.

“But how was I to do this?

“The empty state of my exchequer held forth no prospect of my being able to pay my passage across the ocean, so I tried several times to get a chance to work my way over.

“Fate was against me, for all my endeavors proved failures.

“Then I tried to smuggle myself on board, but here again for a long time I was unsuccessful.

“At last one night as I was prowling around the docks I spied the captain of the Victoria and Albert, which was to sail the following day, making towards his vessel with a parcel under his arm, half seas over.

“Proposing to carry his bundle on board for him my offer was immediately accepted. When I had deposited it on the table in his cabin he threw a shilling at me, gave me a glass of grog, and told me to make myself scarce. Instead of doing this

I stole down into the hold of the vessel and crept among a lot of barrels and boxes.

“The tub must have been built just after Noah’s Ark, for it was overrun with rats and in a leaky condition. After I had been down below what seemed to me about a year, I was compelled to sally forth in search of nourishment.

“When I was conducted into the presence of the captain he was furious, and threatened to throw me overboard. He mitigated his sentence, however, into giving me a good thrashing, and then ordered me to be off and try to help the sailors in their work.

“We had then been about three days at sea.

“About a week after this—for I kept no reckoning of time, a terrible storm came upon us, which dismasted the vessel, and for two whole weeks we were rolling about in the ocean, for we were very heavily laden.

“At last we rigged up jury masts, but unfortunately we soon after encountered another storm, which carried these also over the side. Soon afterwards one night we came into collision with another vessel, which almost cut us in two. The stranger, instead of standing by us, sheered off in the darkness. We had now no resource left but to get into the boats and take our chances in them.

"The ship settled so fast that we had no time to take any provisions or water on board, while the sea ran so high that the boats soon parted company. Our boat had not been clear of the ship very long before we found we could not make any head against the wind and swell.

"Towards night the following day the wind lulled, and there was every appearance of fine weather coming on, but we had nothing to eat, no water, and were quite exhausted.

"We did the best we could during the night, but when the sun rose it scorched us.

"The following day most of us were laid in the bottom of the boat, dying from thirst and hunger.

"Then the sky clouded over and a heavy rain fell, which refreshed us. We caught what water we could, and all drank until our thirst was quenched; still we were all terribly hungry.

"The morning after I perceived whisperings and pointings at me, and I thought my time had arrived for handing in my checks. Then one of the men began to sharpen his knife on the side of the boat and came aft to where I lay.

"I was too weak to complain, and never stirred.

"Just as he raised his arm to strike me I rolled over, and then some one cried, 'A sail!'

"We shouted, hoisted a signal of distress, then

shook hands and pulled at the oars as we never pulled before.

"The vessel, which proved to be 'A liner,' and bound for New York, took us on board, carefully attended to our miseries, and soon after deposited us in that city.

"I was very thankful for my narrow escape, and resolved never to try my fortune again on the great deep.

"My first experience in New York was as a 'printer's devil,' where I can assure you I did not stay very long. Then I tried my hand at painting, brick laying, and stone cutting.

"One night, when I was taking my supper at a restaurant, at the table at which I sat a good looking, elderly personage sat opposite to me, who seemed to divide his attention between his soup and the newspaper.

"His general appearance was of the shabby-genteel order.

"The clothing he wore had evidently been made of costly material, and fitted him well, but was in a state of wild decay. His linen was not immaculate, and looked as if it would be all the better if it paid a visit to the laundry. This he explained later on in the evening, when we got more convivial, by informing me that the most

prominent parts of them were composed of celluloid, and that he had been too busy to 'get them up' that day.

"But, although his clothing was rather shiny, he did not seem to be short of money. He asked me several questions regarding my occupation, and where I was putting up. On finishing our supper we rambled forth together on the Bowery, and called at several other places, where my new-found friend stood treat all evening like a brick.

"Towards midnight he asked me to partake of his hospitality that night, unless I preferred staying on Fifth avenue.

"On consenting to oblige him we turned off the Bowery, when he conducted me to a rather dilapidated-looking house and up a rickety staircase. Entering a room we sat down, when he proposed that we take a night-cap.

"Taking a pitcher for that purpose he went out to procure some beer, leaving me in the room. It was fairly well furnished, but, like its owner, showed unmistakable evidence of being the worse for wear.

"When he returned we continued our conversation, drinking more beer and smoking cigars. He then took a check from his pocket and showed me how, by using chemicals—the nature of which

he kindly explained to me—he could make the check assume a more respectable appearance. He then proposed my becoming his partner on equal terms; his part of the work to be confined to procuring and raising the checks; mine in the disposing of them.

“I told him I would consider the matter over and give him my answer to his proposition in the morning.

“We then retired to rest.

“During the night I reflected upon the splendid accommodation, the bill of fare, light work and freedom furnished in her gracious Majesty’s free boarding houses, and had no desire to make the acquaintance of those furnished by the authorities of this glorious republic.

“My new-found friend was not evidently an early riser; so in the morning I arose, dressed myself as quietly as possible, and took my departure without bidding him good-bye.

“I jumped on a street car and spent a nickel in increasing the distance between us, as far as possible for that amount.

“I then took breakfast and made the distance a little more by walking.

“Going to a suburban station I boarded a train and waited in the toilet room until the conductor

had gone through the car. Walking up the aisle I noticed an emigrant fast asleep. I relieved him of his pass, which was conveniently placed in his hat, and moved on into the smoking car. This pass carried me to the coal mining and oil districts of Pennsylvania, where for some time I worked in the mines. Then the spirit of unrest again overcame me and I went out to California, where I visited the gold mines.

"I afterwards worked in the silver districts of Nebraska and the Black Hills, and finally drifted back east to Philadelphia. Here I soon procured work as a stone cutter; but, unfortunately, one Saturday night my employer paid me two weeks' wages by check.

"It was decoration day the following Monday, and somehow or other the figures on the check, which I got cashed, did not tally exactly with those on the stub; so the police unceremoniously awoke me one night and furnished me with fresh quarters. I honestly assure you that I have no recollection of raising the check, which fact I also communicated to the police; besides this, the calligraphy did not in the least resemble mine, being all blurred and looking very much as if it had been performed with a stick, there being also large

drops of tallow thereon, as if dropped from a candle.

"The authorities, however, refused to accept my version of the affair, and sent me out to the penitentiary.

"I worked out my time some few days ago, and here I am.

"And now, mate, having finished my story, I hope you will stand treat once more, for talking is mighty dry work."

"Oh, no, my friend, I think you have had quite sufficient for this morning, and must be off; but here is a dollar for you; do not spend it on beer; so good-bye."

CHAPTER XIII.

It being now close upon nine o'clock, Aleck started out on his search for work.

He visited store after store all day long, and tried to get a situation as clerk in a merchant's office, or as accountant, or bookkeeper, or something of that kind. But he could not persuade any of the proprietors or managers of his capacity for such work; and, tired out and down-hearted, he retired early to rest.

The following day it was the same; he walked about from store to factory, from warehouse to mill, but met with no success.

As he was going down Ridge avenue in the afternoon he stopped in front of a window in which were displayed a lot of cards with book-keeper wanted, clerk wanted, teamster wanted, cook wanted, and so on.

He now thought he had got to the end of his troubles, and entered.

He found himself in a carpeted room, with several other persons therein, all seated around on

chairs, but failed to notice anything new in his appearance which should cause them all to laugh so.

Seated behind a desk and wire screen were a woman and man, who were evidently the proprietors. The woman was trying to pacify a young lady, seemingly about twenty years of age, who was crying and begging for the return of some of her money, which had been promised in the event of their not securing her a position as governess.

At the other end of the screen a scene of a different kind was being enacted. Here was a young man who had been caught the same way. He had paid down his ten dollars, for which he held a receipt, and also a written guarantee to find him a position as bookkeeper in one month, or refund half the money.

As Aleck entered he was addressing the man, calling him a "Thieving old rascal." "You may think you caught a poor sucker when you landed me, but, although I am a stranger in this country, I have a place at which I am earning good money, and have lots of it; see! and, by George, if you do not hand me that five dollars back right now I will spend ten times the amount in advertising your contemptible manner in treating people in all the papers in Philadelphia. Come, no dallying;

out with that five dollars or I am off to fulfil my threat."

The proprietor found that this time he caught a tartar. He handed the man half of his money back, and as he did so Aleck discreetly withdrew.

Thus day after day passed away, and Aleck's prospects grew no brighter.

Then one afternoon he secured a position as clerk in a country store in Western Philadelphia.

He was to be paid \$20 salary per month, with board, at the commencement, with a promise of more salary if his services proved satisfactory.

He boarded in a tavern at first, but not liking either mine host or his quarters he, with a fellow clerk, resolved to rent a small cottage, and the two kept "Bachelors' Hall"

The village was situated on the side of a hill, at the foot of which ran a stream of sufficient size and power to turn a grist and saw-mill. The village proper contained about six hundred inhabitants, and was named Brooklands.

The two young men furnished the cottage well enough for their needs, and here Aleck spent close upon two long years.

One Sunday afternoon as the two young men were lazily enjoying themselves swinging in hammocks and reading, in the woods behind their cot-

tage, a neighbor came along and addressing them, said: "My friends, are you aware the Pennsylvania Railroad intends building through Brooklands, and that the line will run through both your lot and mine? 'Tis a fact, sure.

"I bought and paid for my lot yesterday, and I advise you to keep mum and do the same by yours to-morrow."

The young men arose with alacrity the following morning and never rested until they had the deed for the land in their possession.

That very evening as the parties were admiring their newly acquired property, they were somewhat surprised to find a stranger walking towards them. They advanced to meet him, and at the cottage door he addressed Aleck: "Good evening, Mr. Hormby, how are you?" said he.

Aleck looked hard at the stranger for some time, and then answered: "You have the advantage of me, for I do not remember ever having met you before."

"What, not remember the reprobate you met in Philadelphia one summer morning nearly two years ago," said he. "I am that self-same George Smith, however; though I must be greatly changed, since you fail to recognize me."

Aleck did not evince much of a desire to renew

the acquaintance, when the stranger blurted out: "Oh, you needn't be afraid of me, I am not the small-pox, besides, I have also lived a different life since I left you that morning, and am now, as you may notice from my changed appearance, in different circumstances."

Aleck, who was still skeptical, then said: "What are you doing now?"

"I am now a surveyor for the Pennsylvania Railway, and that is what brings me here, to take a bird's-eye view of your property."

On gaining this information, Aleck warmly shook him by the hand, and invited him into the cottage. He then asked Smith to partake of refreshments, which that gentleman declined, saying: "I have just had supper at one of the village hotels."

"Then perhaps you could drink a bottle of beer?" said Aleck.

"No, thank you, I have never tasted beer since the day I saw you last in Philadelphia. After you left me that morning I resolved to lead a different life. Instead of spending the dollar you gave me for drink I took care of it and made it go as far as possible. Soon after you left me I made the acquaintance of one of our road's surveyors, who engaged me as his assistant. Then, after serving

a year with him, I was promoted to my present position, and here I am, both glad and proud to renew our friendship."

Aleck then introduced Smith to his companion, who invited him to take a cigar, which Smith accepted.

Then he asked for a drink of water, which Aleck's companion had to fetch from a neighbor's pump, nearly a quarter of a mile distant.

While he was away Aleck explained to Smith that there was a spring of water on their property, but that it was not good, and all their water for drinking and cooking they had to carry from a neighbor's. But that does not trouble us much, for we take a couple of pails as we go to our work in the morning and when we return at night bring them back full. For other purposes, such as washing, cleaning, and the garden, the spring water answers."

After Smith had appeased his thirst the three young men took a stroll around the property, Aleck and his companion critically examining the stranger's face as they did so. Then they came to the spring, which Aleck pointed out to Smith.

That worthy cast a glance at the spring and then became suddenly interested.

On examining it more carefully he noticed a thick strata of oil upon the surface.

At length he remarked: "Well, gentlemen, it is better to be born lucky than rich. You have bought a piece of land, for a mere song, with a veritable gold mine upon it, and you will have also railroad facilities right at your door."

"What do you mean?" asked the two others in breathless excitement.

"I mean that, besides having bought a strip of land which must increase considerably in value when the railroad has to cut a way through it, you have also a valuable oil spring on your premises. I am positive there is a rich vein of oil here; the next question is, have you the capital to develop or work the vein? It will take a considerable amount of money to do this, for you will need an engine, pumps, vats and lots of other things, besides having quite a sum of money to pay in wages before it brings any return."

This cast a damper on the spirits of his two companions.

"If you have not sufficient money to start the thing going—and I see by your looks that you have not—we shall have to get a capitalist interested in the affair; but, he will run away with the lion's share of the profits, therefore, I should

advise you to sell out entirely to him. I think, after consideration, it will be best for you to sell the property outright. But there need be no hurry about it. I shall be in the vicinity for several days yet. You can during that time consider the matter carefully over, and if you decide to sell, I think I know a party who will be sufficiently interested to buy from you."

Aleck and his companion, after warmly thanking their visitor for his kind offer, studied over the situation.

They had not sufficient money to even start the business, and decided to sell the property if a purchaser could be found.

When Smith called upon them soon after they informed him of their decision, and asked him to open a correspondence with the capitalist he had spoken of.

Smith promised to do this, at the same time advising them not to sell the property for less than \$12,000.

Aleck then asked him if he could not be present at the time appointed for an interview, as he seemed to be well informed on the subject of oil wells, of which subject neither he nor his companion had the slightest knowledge.

"All right," replied Smith, "you helped me

when I was in difficulties, and have been the cause of my leading a different life, so in return I will do whatever lies in my power to oblige you now."

A few days later on Smith returned to Brooklands, accompanied by a gentleman whom he introduced to our two young men as Mr. Wright.

After spending about an hour in examining the spring, Mr. Wright offered first to furnish the capital to work the well, then ten thousand dollars for the property.

Aleck informed Mr. Wright that they did not care to work the well, and preferred selling, but that they would not accept less than \$12,000 for it.

Mr. Wright then left them, saying he must take a few days to consider about it.

This left our party in a state of great anxiety for several days; they now wished they had clinched the bargain at once.

Mr. Wright, however, was just as anxious to buy as they were to sell, and in a few days he tempted them by adding another thousand dollars to his previous offer.

This time they immediately accepted the price offered, and the property was soon transferred to Mr. Wright.

When the payment for the property was made, Aleck proposed to his companion that they should

give Smith the odd thousand for his advice and assistance.

To this proposition he readily consented, at the same time remarking that, in spite of Smith's former life, he seemed to be a good fellow and had treated them honestly and well.

"We should have been glad before we saw him to sell the property for one-fifth of the amount, so you see a good turn is seldom lost, and this is the result of your generosity to him in Philadelphia."

Our party were greatly surprised, however, at Smith's positively refusing to accept the thousand dollars, all they could persuade him to take being a small present.

Aleck wrote home informing his friends of his good fortune, also promising to join them as soon as possible.

He gave his employer notice that in a month from date he should leave him; this having been agreed upon by both parties mutually at the time of the engagement.

Before the month expired the new well was completed and an immense supply of oil obtained, Mr. Wright coining money thereby.

A few days before his departure from Brooklands, Aleck received two letters from home; in the one from Nellie—who had completed her

school days, and was again at home—she wished him to hasten to Darnley as quickly as possible, as they were much in need of his advice and assistance.

The other was from Ned and Annie Hormby, and assured him of a warm welcome at home.

One bright morning soon after this, Aleck having settled his affairs in Brooklands and bid his friends good-bye, he took his place on the stage-coach for Grafton, where he made railroad connections for Philadelphia, and was soon being whirled on his way homeward.

It would be well nigh impossible to describe Aleck's feelings as he stepped off the train at Darnley. His first visit was to his old home, where he found Ned and Annie waiting to receive him. He was soon in the arms of the latter, and afterwards shaking hands cordially with Ned.

After Ned's release from imprisonment, which had cured him from all desire to continue manufacturing contraband whiskey, he had again returned to his former occupation as fisherman, and he and Annie were once more content and happy.

Aleck did not arrive at Darnley until after midnight, so he had to postpone visiting Nellie until the following day.

Early next morning he was off to the residence of the Smalls, where he found Nellie anxiously waiting to receive him. She was greatly embarrassed as she advanced to meet him, while Aleck's heart pounded like a steam hammer.

Then they were locked in each other's arms once more, and for a time in indescribable happiness. The cause of his agitation then released herself from his embrace with a mighty effort; then asking him to take a seat she went in search of her mother and brother.

Nellie seemed more beautiful than ever to Aleck; more womanly, more accomplished, and still as true and warm-hearted as ever.

A few moments later the door of the room opened, and Harry Small rushed in with outstretched hands, exclaiming as he did so: "Hello, Aleck, old friend, how are you?" Soon Mrs. Small and Nellie followed, the mother saying as she shook Aleck warmly by the hand: "I hope you have come to stay." We will not endeavor to picture the joy which Aleck's return caused. It is sufficient to say that no unpleasant allusions to the past marred their present happiness, and all was forgiven and forgotten.

After dinner, when Mrs. Small was indulging

in her usual "siesta," Aleck had to relate to Harry and Nellie an account of his adventures.

Harry, after Aleck had finished his story, walked to the window and looked out upon the road.

"I think I will take a walk and leave you for a short time," said he, taking his hat. "I suppose you can spare my company for a time, can't you? There is an old adage which says two's company, three's none; but I feel like taking a short walk, and will return before long."

Aleck had spoken to Nellie inquiring the whereabouts of her father, but Nellie had answered him by saying: "My mother wishes to speak to you herself about the matter, and has been very anxious for your return. You have risen about one hundred per cent in her estimation lately, and when we discuss the matter she wishes us all to be present." They spent a few happy moments together, and then Mrs. Small and Harry returned.

There was something sweetly pathetic in the manner in which Mrs. Small began to inform Aleck of their troubles and fears.

"My husband," she began, "about three months ago received intelligence of the death of his oldest brother in England, and also that he had fallen

heir to the estate. He at once resolved to return to his paternal home, there to attend to the business, and wished me to accompany him on the journey. I did not feel inclined for traveling at that time, so Mr. Small undertook the journey alone. Since he left Darnley we have had no tidings from him, except a short telegram from Liverpool, in which he stated: 'Landed safe; in good health; will write soon.' We think something serious must have happened to him or he would have written before now. What is your opinion?"

"I think the same," replied Aleck, "also that some of us ought to follow him and see what is the trouble."

The Small family were bowed down with grief and sorrow, thinking that the husband and father of all these years had either deserted them or that something terrible had happened to him.

CHAPTER XIV.

Lawyer Small was the youngest son of a large land owner and wealthy banker in Lancashire, England.

He had two brothers, William and Henry.

His father was an avaricious, grasping old man; his mother had died when he was quite young.

The father could not bear the idea of dividing his riches equally among his three sons, and determined that it should all descend to the oldest son, William, whom he was also resolved should make a wealthy marriage.

The estate was entailed and descended to William by right.

When the young men arrived at maturity Henry, the second son, who was of a roving disposition, had an estate purchased for him in South Africa, while Richard, the youngest, was also provided for in the same way, by having a cattle ranch bought for him in Texas.

The father sought and found a bride for William, a lady possessing a snug fortune of thirty thousand pounds.

Her father had made his money in cotton manufacturing, and wished his daughter to marry into a good old family, one with an established name; and this was also her desire.

Miss Lawson was a woman of fine personal appearance, tall, fair, and majestic, but of her other accomplishments the least said the better, for she was ignorant, also unrefined in her mind and manners, and William found that he could not spend a single day or hour in her company with comfort.

One sunny afternoon in June, just thirteen months after William Small's marriage, Mrs. Small presented her husband with a little daughter.

As the little girl entered this world her grandfather passed out of it.

When the elder Small had been consigned to the grave William decided to retire from the banking business—which had always been repugnant to him—and live the life of a country gentleman. He kept his horses and hounds, had large parties continually at the hall, indulged in horse racing and other kindred sports. This he kept up for several years, and then suddenly shut himself up in his rooms, turning into a recluse. He dismissed all the servants it was not absolutely necessary to

keep, sold his horses and hounds, began to fell and dispose of all the trees upon the estate, locking himself up in his library most part of the day.

Soon after this his wife died, but the emotionless man showed no signs of grief if he felt any, and lived with more rigid economy than ever.

We will take the privilege of introducing the father and daughter to our readers, as they sit in the breakfast room this December morning.

The father is dressed in garments that have seen better days, and is dividing his attention between his coffee and toast and the newspaper.

The young lady has evidently breakfasted, for she is seated at one of the windows with a book. There seems to be very little love or sympathy between the two, for they seldom speak to each other, and that evidently only when necessary.

After the father had finished his breakfast he rung a bell, when a servant cleared the table, and the steward entered to receive his orders for the day.

While the two men were engaged in conversation Miss Laura noiselessly left the room and dressed herself for a walk. Taking a look at the young lady we find her decidedly handsome, well made, with blue eyes, a rather pale complexion

and regular features. She is dressed plainly but neatly, and her walk evidently does her good, the brisk December air putting more color in her cheeks.

On leaving the house, Miss Laura Small proceeded to the extremity of the grounds and passed through a little wooden gate in the fence. She then walked about a hundred yards down the road and entered a small wood.

“Will this miserable life never come to an end?” she exclaimed, with tears in her eyes.

“Am I to live in this atmosphere of oppression, with a father who has not a particle of love for me, with no friends, and with my feelings stifled and trimmed to pattern, until I do not know whether I now dare express a desire or wish of my own?”

The words broke from her in a burst of passionate sorrow; then putting her hands before her face she broke out into a torrent of tears. The violence of her sobs made her tremble and shake, and she was obliged to sit upon one of the fallen trees for a time to rest. Her grief illuminated her features, making them still more beautiful, and Helen of Troy could not have been fairer than this grief-stricken young maiden.

After a time she dried her tears and returned

to the house, there to resume the monotony of her daily existence.

As she entered she met her father, who was going out to take his daily constitutional in over-seeing the premises and farms.

The snow was now falling fast upon the hard, frosty ground, which bore a strong resemblance to the man upon it. He simply told his daughter frigidly what time he would be back to dinner, as he passed her, and then went his way.

With the exception of this walk, Squire Small scarcely ever appeared outside of his grounds. Once or twice a year he ran up to London, returning in about a month; and while there the neighbors whispered he was engaged in some speculation or other.

After these visits to town he was more cheerful and liberal for a time, but soon returned to his old miserly ways. It was a pity to see these fine old grounds and once beautiful garden neglected as they were. Where six or seven men had once found ample employment, now one man had to suffice. The stables, once replete with fine horses, had now one solitary occupant, and that one a dilapidated old nag not worth its feed. Things had been going to rack and ruin in this way for many

years, when one day Squire Small was stricken with sickness.

They laid him upon his bed, by the side of which stands his faithful daughter. The doctor said it was nothing serious, nothing to be alarmed about, simply the effects of a severe cold; still, he lay there day after day, scarcely ever speaking, with his head close to the window watching the driving snow and rain.

One day he called Laura to him and spoke to her of his late parsimonious ways; then thanking her for her kind attention to him he promised to act better, behave more to her like a father, if ever he arose from that sick bed.

Then by degrees as the weather got warmer he slowly recovered.

Late one bleak April morning Squire Small was helped down stairs into his library, where he and his daughter partook of breakfast at a comfortable table moved up to the blazing fire. A drizzling rain fell outside, obscuring the view and shutting out the landscape. After finishing breakfast, Squire Small, with the assistance of his daughter, ran over the long-neglected correspondence, took a glance at the morning newspaper, and then once more sent for his steward.

That gentleman at once entered the room,

bringing his books with him and expecting to go through the usual business routine.

“No, Wilson, I sent for you for a different purpose this morning; that part of the business I shall leave in your hands entirely for the future.” Then he gave Wilson some orders which astonished that worthy gentleman greatly. The regime of the house was from that day put upon a more liberal footing. Squire Small and his daughter receiving and paying visits to their friends and neighbors. He still calculated and labored to increase his vast fortune; examined securities and mortgages, for his mind was too deeply dyed to be changed at his age, but he acted the part of the miser no longer.

For his daughter he did not seem to be able to do enough, and spared nothing on her account. Her room was refurnished and filled with every luxury, a companion procured for her, horses and a carriage, in fact she had only to express a wish and it was immediately gratified.

Her father well knew that to her excellent nursing he owed his life, and now never allowed a day to pass without spending a portion of it in her company.

So things went on for about the space of a year, when grim death, that great reaper of profligate

and miser alike, called upon William Small to pay his last account. The estate, of course, passed to the next heir, but his vast fortune was left entirely to his daughter.

Of the second son, Henry, nothing had been heard from for many years, and he had been given up long ago as dead.

Soon after arriving on his estate near Cape Town he had married a rich American young lady, who at the time was visiting that place.

The climate of Africa, however, did not agree with his wife, and some months after her marriage she resolved to return home to Cleveland for a short time for the benefit of her health.

Henry, after his wife left for home, was very low spirited for a time; he wrote several letters to the address furnished him by his wife, but to these letters he never received any response, and thought his lovely wife had deserted him. He was disconsolate for a time, neglecting his business, and walking the streets of Cape Town from morning till night.

One day, when sitting in a tavern smoking his pipe and drinking, a party of men entered the room and began to talk about visiting the heart of the continent on a trading expedition.

Henry listened to these men for a time and then joined in the conversation.

He ascertained that the party was to leave Cape Town in about three weeks, thanked the men for the information they had given him, then took his departure for home to think about the advisability of joining it.

During the night he decided to do so.

He then sold his estate to a neighbor, who was very glad to buy it, converted the money into articles suitable for trading with the negroes, and soon afterwards, with his companions, was bound for the interior, and had never been heard from since.

All the lawyers' efforts to find Henry being fruitless, it brought Richard Small in as the next heir to the property.

When Richard Small, the youngest son, left England he proceeded to his new home in Texas. Here he did not stay long; a rural life was not suited to his tastes; so, selling his property he began to study law. He then afterwards removed to Maine, got his first brief, and was soon afterwards making a comfortable living.

The lawyers to the estate in England, Messrs. Handsley & Artindale, of Preston, having failed to locate Henry Small, or hear any tidings

respecting him, concluded he was dead, and at once put themselves in communication with Richard, the next heir in line to the entailed property.

He saw at once on receiving their letter that it was imperative for him to go to England—and as we have stated before, Mrs. Small declining to accompany him thither, he made his preparations for proceeding there alone.

Candidly, Nellie told her mother it was her duty to go with her father, that the voyage would be of great benefit to her health, but Mrs. Small persisted in saying she did not care to go.

One morning soon after, lawyer Small left all necessary instructions with his clerk in the law office at Southport for conducting the business during his absence; he then left Darnley and proceeded to Boston. Here he spent a day with his son Harry, who was now a junior partner in a law firm there, then he took the train for Fall River, and from there the boat for New York.

As he was going up Broadway the following morning to visit the offices of the Cunard line and arrange for his passage across, he was almost knocked down by a man strongly resembling himself and about his own age, who pushed against him on that crowded thoroughfare.

The stranger, instead of apologizing, remarked:

"Just have a care, my friend, about running into people on a busy street like this."

Then looking carefully at Mr. Small, he exclaimed: "Hello! Dick, how are you?"

"I have seen you before somewhere," replied Mr. Small, critically examining the features of the other, "but for the life of me I could not say when or where."

"What!" said the stranger, "not remember your old classmate and companion at Dr. Markham's establishment at Preston, Jack Durham?" said he. "Surely you must remember me."

"Oh, yes, I remember you very well now;" then taking his arm he said: "what are you doing in this country and how long have you been here?"

"I have been here about sixteen years now, and am a gentleman at leisure at present," replied Durham.

"If that is the case," said Mr. Small, "perhaps you would not object to going with me; I have some little business to transact to-day, and when that is done we can repair to some hotel, take dinner together, and then relate our various experiences since parting in England."

The two men then walked arm in arm together up Broadway; when, after Mr. Small had concluded his business, they entered a hotel to take

dinner and chat about the good old times they used to have together at school.

This Jack Durham was the only son of a former wealthy shipping merchant at Barrow-in-Furness, England. On the death of his father he inherited his vast riches. It only took Jack two or three years to run through this fortune, after which, for many years, he had lived on his wits.

Jack's figure had been a prominent one in the principal gambling houses in London, Liverpool, and Manchester for many years after his father's death; but after a time his actions became suspicious in these places, then too glaring to escape notice, and Jack had finally been tabooed, and plainly told he was a blackleg. It is painful to add, also, that Jack was informed that his presence would not be tolerated in any of these places thereafter.

He then turned his attention to horse racing, making a book on the Derby, on which he lost heavily, and then defaulted.

England now having become too hot for him he resolved to try his fortune in the United States. Here for a short time he had what he termed a "run of luck."

Cards and dice seemed to favor him; at billiards

he was a masterpiece, only once in a while losing a game to make his opponent play deeper.

It chanced to happen one night at one of the swell clubs in New York, that as Durham and another member were playing cards, the cards all ran in his opponent's favor; Jack resorted to his old tricks, and, being caught, was politely asked to return his membership ticket.

He drifted down to New Orleans, and at once began to work the Mississippi boats.

Here he ran across a different class of gamblers altogether to the tenderfeet of New York and the worthy twigs of the British nobility, and after twice looking down the barrel of an enormous six-shooter decided to change his field of labor.

He afterwards worked various other cities—St. Louis, Chicago and Cincinnati; finally, returning to New York, where that morning when he accidentally met Mr. Small, he was in that state which the people of this wicked world would usually term "hard up."

After partaking of a good dinner, with a liberal supply of wine, Mr. Small informed his companion that his oldest brother, William, had died recently; that it was thought his brother Henry was dead also, not having been heard from for

many years, and all trace of him lost; that, therefore, the family estate in England descended by right to him, and that he was going to his old home to look into the matter.

CHAPTER XV.

It was a hot evening in July, the atmosphere in the room was almost stifling, and as the waiter removed the things from the table the two men went out on to the verandah to smoke.

Returning to the room shortly afterwards, Mr. Small asked Durham how he had prospered since they separated as school boys.

"Oh, my father left me all his money when he died," replied Durham, "but I have engaged in some unfortunate speculations in this country lately, and am, the same as you, about to return home, but am waiting for remittances from England."

"If that is the case," said Mr. Small, "you can have no objection to returning with me; I will advance you the money for your passage; we shall be company for each other over, and you can repay me on our arrival in England."

"All right," replied Durham, "I am willing. Perhaps you could accommodate me with 'fifty' to-night, then to-morrow morning before we meet

I can purchase some few things that I shall require in crossing."

"Certainly," replied Mr. Small, "here it is," producing the amount from his pocketbook; "meet me here at ten o'clock to-morrow morning."

That night Durham managed to make his fifty into five hundred at one of the gambling houses. Punctually at ten o'clock the following day Durham was at the rendezvous, where, handing back Mr. Small the fifty dollars he had advanced him the night before, he coolly informed him that the expected remittance had arrived from England, and he would pay his own expenses over.

After partaking of breakfast, Mr. Small paid the hotel bill, and the two once more returned to the shipping office to engage a stateroom for Durham, afterwards taking a drive around the city. During the afternoon the two men wandered about the docks, visited the vessel, examined their rooms, and then returned to the hotel where Mr. Small had stopped the night previously.

The weather had changed considerably since the day before, and this night they drew their chairs up to the fire as they drank their wine and smoked their cigars, and chatted about the good

old times they used to have together during their school days.

Late at night—to Mr. Small, who still kept Darnley hours—they parted; but it was still too early for Jack to retire, so he returned to one of his old haunts, again winning considerably.

Durham sat at the card table that night until all his opponents dropped out of the game, one after another.

Dame fortune never smiled on him more bountifully than she did this evening; she kept with him, in fact, until not a player in the house would hazard another hand with him.

Then, with those of his defeated companions who would prolong their stay in his company, a mighty scene of revelry began. The tables and floors were covered with empty wine bottles, while songs and jokes were wafted through the windows out into the summer air, reaching the amazed listeners on the street far below.

The toadies humored Durham with, "He's a Jolly Good Fellow," "We Won't Go Home Till Morning," and such ditties, until the lateness of the hour and the state of the company made it impossible for the major part of them to proceed thither, mine host having to accommodate them with beds, most part of them having to be carried

there, Jack Durham being included in the number.

He at once fell into a drunken sleep, a sleep which was profound enough, without being in any way refreshing. All kinds of confusing and absurd dreams passed through his mind, from which he was at length startled by finding that some one was knocking at the door of his chamber.

On inquiring "Who was there?" the waiter informed him that it was seven o'clock, and the time at which he had requested to be called.

"Go away," Durham replied, "I do not care to get up yet."

Then he lay awake for a short time and studied over the situation.

"Here I am," thought he, "with my pockets full of money, yet engaged to proceed with a man to England whose ways and deeds are as wide apart from mine as the poles. If I stay here I can enjoy myself to my heart's content, whereas, if I go home with Small we shall probably quarrel before we have been in each other's company a week. With the exception of being able to chat about old school days we have not one single thought in common. Oh, hang it all, I will fall asleep again, taking my chances for the future."

So saying he once more turned over and was soon again in the arms of Morpheus.

Song and laughter again rang through his brain for a short period, then his habitual inclination for an early drink mastered him, after which he determined to carry out the proposed programme and go to England.

The sun was now high in the heavens, the morning was far advanced, in fact, it was almost time for the boat to start, with Durham possessing a teeming headache as the result of his last night's debauch. He hastily took several more bracers, and then felt it incumbent for him to start for the boat, where Mr. Small was anxiously waiting for him.

"I say, Jack, old fellow, what detained you? We came pretty near leaving you behind; besides, you do not appear to be up to concert pitch by a long way."

"No," replied Durham, "and I suppose there are times when you don't feel in the highest spirits, either."

This was all that passed at the time, Durham retiring to his room, where he was soon fast asleep.

With a heart torn with conflicting emotions, Mr. Small watched Durham as he disappeared

below; then, passing his hand wearily over his brow, he returned to his seat, and listlessly turned over the leaves of a law book until Durham once more appeared on deck.

During the long, weary hours that followed not a word was spoken by either. There were one or two attempts at reading, but it was all in vain.

At length the wearisome day came to an end; the passengers, with the exception of a few stragglers, "turning in" for the night.

It was not very comfortable below, for the Atlantic began to behave in rather a rude manner, while the boat sometimes seemed to leap into the air, and then dive into the great depths below. Most of the cabin passengers remained below the following day, being troubled excessively with sea sickness.

Mr. Small seemed to be afflicted about as bad as any one on board with the malady, remaining below the whole day.

Durham, on the contrary, did not seem to be affected in the least; he was up and on deck early, eating his meals with as much apparent relish as if he had been on shore. Towards evening the storm lulled, when a few of the more venturesome gentlemen began to stagger around the deck. Then came supper, at which meal, and after, Dur-

ham drank heavily with three other boon companions he had already become acquainted with, who were from Kentucky.

Before long, one of the party proposed a game of cards.

All hands being willing, the four were soon hard at work betting heavily on the result. They kept it up until eleven o'clock, when Durham arose from the table a heavy loser.

The card playing being over for that night, the bottles and glasses appeared once more for an hour or so, the party then separating for the night.

Mr. Small soon discovered that Durham's system was permeated through and through with a mania for gambling, also that he was losing vast sums of money in his pursuit of it.

One day he took Jack to task, advising him to stop.

"How do you desire me to spend my time?" asked his companion; "here you get stowed away in some corner or other, poring over a volume of Blackstone, or Coke and Lyttleton about the law regarding entail, utterly oblivious of anything or anybody round about you. As to my propensity for gambling, I think it comes with a bad grace from you to set yourself on a pinnacle and preach

the 'follow me' doctrine. Who, I wonder, instilled into my unworthy carcass the desire for gambling? who at school initiated Jack Durham and the rest of the boys into the mysteries of 'All fours' and the other games? winning most part of our pocket money before half the term was over, but your worthy self; yet I never laid the charge at your door."

"That may be all true, but I nipped the desire in the bud; and you are old enough and have had sufficient experience to know better; besides, at the rate you have been losing lately, you would soon empty the coffers of a Rothschild."

Mr. Small, after this conversation, still continued his reading and studying law, while Durham was just as persistent in risking his chances with the pack.

When they finally reached Liverpool, ill luck having persistently stuck to Durham all through the voyage, and having also made vast inroads into his pocketbook, the two men had drifted farther apart. They stopped at the same hotel, took dinner together, and then Mr. Small having various matters of business to attend to, they separated for the night.

Durham once more tried to retrieve the fallen

state of his finances at the gambling table, but was again unsuccessful.

Mr. Small was detained in Liverpool longer than he expected, it being after five o'clock before the two men left the hotel, taking a cab for the station.

On their arrival there they found that the Preston express had started some ten minutes before they reached the station, and that they would have to wait over an hour for a slow train to take them to that place.

Mr. Small was considerably annoyed at the delay; he walked up and down the long platform, in and out of the waiting rooms, while his companion was quite serene, and did not seem to care if they should have to wait for a year. There was no help for it, however; old Father Time turns with the same regularity to the patient and impatient alike. At the end of the hour the men found their train, entered into a first-class compartment, closing the door after them.

Mr. Small leaned back in one corner of the carriage, putting his feet on the opposite seat. He took out a book from a satchel and began to read, but try as he might it was impossible for him to keep his attention on his book.

At last he looked up and saw that Durham's gaze was fixed upon him.

"My God," said Durham, as he laid his head back against the padded partition, "but you are splendid company."

The guard then came round, locked the door of the compartment, and they were off.

Passing fields and forest, trees and farm houses, over rumbling bridges and through cuttings of solid rock, over rivers, along valleys, with the engine shrieking shrilly as they neared every station to stop; now plunging into dark and vile smelling tunnels, then out into the welcome daylight again; so scene after scene passed, town after town, village after village, and again the peaceful country. Slowing up at last, they steamed into a great glass-roofed station, one of the busiest in the world, whose walls were covered with advertisements of every kind and color; then they were switched up to a platform filled with waiting passengers and their friends.

As the two men left their compartment and stepped on to the platform a neighboring clock struck seven.

Here, if they both proceeded to their old homes, they would have to separate, Durham, to reach

Barrow, going north, while Mr. Small's home, Blackley Hall, lay in an easterly direction.

But there were no trains going either way that night, so they had to while the time away in Preston until morning.

They went to an old tavern in Fishergate, where, after partaking of a light supper, they took a stroll in the summer twilight.

They passed old places familiar to both, all having some story connected with them of the good old times when they were together at school.

As they walked along, Mr. Small proposed that they should take a peep at the old institution.

"All right," said Durham, "it is too early to go to bed yet, and I would just as soon take a walk in that direction as another."

Taking an old-remembered foot-path on the banks of the river Ribble they soon arrived at the old-fashioned building. The place seemed very little altered, the stone wall surrounding the place and gate just the same as of yore; the old swings and out-door gymnasium still in the same place, while the school itself seemed just the same.

Who can tell what recollections the sight brought into their minds, heaven only knows.

They then entered the "Red Lion Hotel," the old public where both had procured surreptitiously

the forbidden glass of ale or porter in days gone by. Here Mr. Small ordered a bottle of sherry, they replenished their cigar cases, and then returned up the bank of the river in the direction of the town.

It was now getting late, but there was a bright moon. For a time the two men walked on in silence, then Mr. Small resolved to have a little serious conversation with Durham regarding his gambling habits. Entering a small wood on the banks of the stream, Mr. Small asked his companion if he had any objections to taking a short rest.

"None at all," said Durham.

Sitting down on the grass, Mr. Small at once commenced speaking on the subject which was uppermost in his mind. In concluding, he said: "This is probably our last night together; won't you promise me to give up this pernicious habit?"

"No, I will not; besides, I want you to stop your canting hypocrisy; as I have plainly told you before, you created in me this desire for gambling; if you say another word to me on that subject I shall knock you down."

"Oh, you will, will you?"

From high words the two men proceeded to blows; Mr. Small gaining the upper hand.

Then Durham, feeling in his hip pocket for that weapon, a revolver, which is usually carried by men of his class, the sound of a shot rang out on the still night air, and Mr. Small fell dead at his feet.

Breathless and perspiring, intent only on trying to still the suffocating throbbings of his heart, Durham sat down to rest, and then calmly studied over the situation.

When he had cooled down a little he gazed once more on the face of his victim, and then daringly resolved to personate his murdered companion.

"What is there to hinder me?" said he. "We are almost as much alike as two peas; he has given me every information respecting his past life since leaving school, and as to Blackley Hall and its surroundings, I know them just as well as he did."

His next task was to dispose of the corpse.

He went to work stripping it of its clothing, the watch, money, drafts and papers, and then carefully substituted his own. He then visited a distant farmyard which he well remembered, unloosened a clothes line from its poles, and then returned to the scene of the late conflict. Rolling

the corpse down to the brink of the river he wound the rope around the body of the dead man, then tied two large stones to the ends of the cord, gave his dead companion a tremendous push, and all that was mortal of Mr. Small sank to the bottom of the Ribble.

This task occupied Durham for a considerable time, and before he had finished the sun was slowly rising in the east.

He then quickly left the neighborhood, taking a circuitous route, by which he reached Preston. Here, entering the first public house he found open, he drank deeply until he was too much disturbed by the company.

Leaving at about ten o'clock he visited the offices of the lawyers, Messrs. Handsley & Artindale, had a short interview with these gentlemen, and then repaired to a prominent hotel, where he registered as Richard Small.

"I shall require a little lunch," said he to mine host, "which you can serve in my room; also a bottle of brandy; then I shall have a rest for some time, as I have been traveling, and do not feel well."

For some time after his meal, Durham sat in his capacious arm-chair drinking brandy and

brooding over the terrible events through which he had just passed.

"I did not do it wilfully," he said; "it was the result of a momentary passion, and not of a deeply laid plot."

Soon after he fell into a troubled sleep, in which he had horrid dreams; and when he awoke great beads of perspiration were upon his forehead. Suddenly he sprang to his feet, with a proud, defiant gesture, saying: "Oh, hang it all, I never feared man or the devil yet, and am not going to turn coward now."

Consulting his new watch, he exclaimed: "I had no idea it was so late."

Hurriedly completing his toilet, he rushed down the stairs, where the welcome sound of clashing billiard balls met his ear.

Above, all had been silence and gloom, with grim thoughts troubling him; here was life and animation.

He joined in a four-handed game, playing recklessly, pretending to be a novice in the art, and not caring in the least how many times he lost, providing he kept some companions with him. After playing several games, all of which he paid for, besides, treating his new found friends liber-

ally, they took a short walk, visiting several more places; then he invited them to supper.

Returning to the hotel he kept his company at the table as long as possible, the champagne flowing freely, and the night ending in noisy jollity.

Rising early the following morning he walked down to the banks of the Ribble, entered one of the boat-houses there and engaged a boat with single sculls. He passed and repassed the scene of the late conflict, critically examining the place as he did so, but found no vestige of the affair left. Deliberately rowing back, he returned to the hotel, ordered breakfast, paid his bill, and then took a cab, in which he was soon conveyed to the station.

Here he engaged a private compartment in a first-class carriage, tipped the porter, and told him to put the dead man's trunk into the "luggage van;" then going to the restaurant he bought a bottle of brandy, and drank and smoked until the train reached Blackley.

Ordering his trunk to be sent on after him, he walked on briskly in the direction of the hall.

CHAPTER XVI.

Blackley Hall was a very ancient place.

It was situated on the banks of the River Calder, about half a mile from the village.

The building was surrounded by private grounds, through which there ran a smooth road for carriages, with a foot-path running alongside of it for the use of pedestrians. To get into these private grounds you had to pass through a lodge, or the gates, which were kept by a lodge-keeper. At the end of this avenue stood the steward's house, where a stranger would have to pass another examination respecting his business at the hall before being allowed to proceed further. Then a smooth lawn, decorated once again with all kinds of flower beds lay before you. The front of the house faced the river, the land sloping down to its banks.

Sometimes on holidays the grounds were thrown open to visitors, who lingered there until the clock in the old turret struck nine, the hour for them to retire.

Up this avenue and through the private grounds Jack Durham walked, smoking his cigar and taking a nip from his bottle, with as much pomp as any peer of the realm could have assumed.

On arriving at the hall he was met at the door by his supposed niece, who gave him a warm reception.

Conducting him to his chamber, she hastened down stairs and ordered luncheon to be served as quickly as possible.

That meal being at length over, Miss Small asked him if he cared to take a drive.

"No, not to-day, Laura, my dear," replied he, "I am fatigued after my traveling, and shall take a rest."

"Very well, dear uncle," Laura said, "I will take a short drive and rejoin you soon; here are papa's keys to his desk and safe; you can look the contents of them over when you feel disposed for doing so."

She then kissed him heartily, tripped lightly out into the garden, where she made a bouquet for a sick girl she was going to visit; then returning, looking as fresh as the flowers she had gathered, she entered her pony carriage, kissed her hand

lightly to Durham, who stood at the top of the steps, and was driven off.

Durham lost no time in carefully examining the contents of the desk and safe, making a full record of anything that would be of use to him in a small pocket journal.

At length, having finished his task, he took a short walk around the grounds and stables, ordered the trunk, which had arrived, to be taken to his room, and then waited for Laura's return.

After a late dinner they conversed for some time, then, at Durham's request, she played and sang a few old English melodies for him, retiring about half-past nine.

What recollections of former days these songs brought into Durham's mind we will leave the reader to imagine. They were songs which he and his victim had often joined in during the time they were at school together.

He once more took a short stroll in the garden, allowing the summer breeze to cool his fevered brow, and then retired to the library. Here he sat for hours, going over papers and books again, smoking and drinking, doing anything, it did not matter what, to drive his gloomy thoughts away from the scene which haunted him.

It was early in the morning, the dawning light

was peeping through the window curtains when he arose from his chair, closed the desk and staggered off to bed.

Sinking into a deep sleep he did not awake until nearly nine o'clock. Then he went down into the breakfast room, where he found Laura dressed in a light summer dress waiting for him.

As they sat conversing at the breakfast table, Laura remarked: "I presume I shall have to get ready to be turned out, bag and baggage, from Blackley Hall."

"Why so?" asked Durham.

"Because, you and your family will require the place," was the quick reply.

"I suppose you think Blackley is a very beautiful place, and you are much in love with it?"

"Indeed I do," she replied; "it has been my home ever since I was born, and I am very much attached to it."

"Well, my dear, I do not see any reason why you should leave it. I am perfectly willing for you to stay here, and I do not for a moment imagine my family will have any objection to your residing here, either. Besides this, it is going to take me some time to look over your father's accounts, to get familiar with his methods of working the estate, and his business in London, to which place

I shall frequently have to go before it is settled. Again, I do not know whether my wife would care to reside permanently in England; but if she is willing to do so I shall have to return to the United States to make arrangements for disposing of my business there; so you can readily see that there need be no hurry for your leaving the home you love so well."

He then kissed her, told her to make herself as content and happy as she could, retiring once more to the library, where he spent the remainder of the morning in again examining books and papers.

As the clock in the turret struck twelve, Laura knocked at the door, asking him if he was ready for lunch.

Dispatching this meal as quickly as possible, he informed Laura that he was going to Preston to see the lawyers.

On arriving there he bought the swiftest and best horse he could lay his hands upon, spent the remainder of his time lounging about the bar-rooms, returning to Blackley by the last train.

That night he spent the same as the previous one, the disk of the sun appearing in the east before he arose from his arm chair, and once more staggered off to bed.

Early the morning following his new horse arrived.

He took Laura with him to examine the animal, and then, after lunch, they took a drive together.

The new horse moved splendidly, and Laura, who, to tell the truth, was somewhat afraid of his speed and the vicious movement of his ears, praised him highly.

It was wet and stormy the next day.

Laura lay on a lounge reading a novel, while Durham moved restlessly from room to room.

He had made a thorough examination of all the books and documents, and was now sorely perplexed for something to engage his attention upon. As to riding or driving, it was simply impossible in the torrents of rain that fell.

In the afternoon it cleared off a little; then he suddenly resolved to go to London.

He went to Laura's room, informed her of his intention of going to town by the first train, and asked her if she cared to accompany him thither.

On Laura declining, he asked her if she had any commissions he could execute for her while there; then, kissing her and telling her to take good care of herself while he was away, bid her good-bye, and was off.

Arriving in London he threw himself heart and soul into the excitement of gambling and drinking; for a time forgetting his troubles. Luck was with him; he won vast sums of money, and was as happy and light-hearted as it was possible for him to be under the circumstances.

"I've an idea," said Durham one night as he sat in his lonely chamber, "that it would be the safest and best plan for me to disappear with my winnings; leaving my name to be listed among the missing ones."

Once or twice he thought of putting his resolution into effect at once, but finally decided to return once more to Blackley; squeeze as much more money as possible out of the estate, and then leave for some foreign country.

He was filled with dismay when he finally reached Blackley Hall and received the intelligence that his brother Henry had returned.

Durham arrived at Blackley by the last train from Preston; he stayed at the "Blackley Arms" drinking until the place was closed for the night.

All the household had retired, with the exception of Laura, who opened the door for him, giving him at the same time the news.

"When did my brother arrive?" asked he.

"By the four o'clock express. He retired early,

saying he was tired out by his travels. Shall I call him?"

"Oh, no," answered Durham, who had kept perfectly cool during the interview, "to-morrow morning will answer the purpose just as well; if he has been traveling, he needs the rest." Saying this, and bidding Laura "Good night," he entered the library.

Pondering over the news he had just received, he waited until Laura had retired.

Then, ransacking the safe of its contents, he quietly stole out of the house, walked over to the stables, and by the light of the moon saddled his horse. The animal had never been out of the stable during Durham's absence, and was in prime condition for a run.

Hastily mounting, Durham said: "I ought to be in Preston in an hour or so, then I will take the first train leaving there for—anywhere. But, travel as fast as he could, the thoroughbred could not satisfy the frenzied impatience of his rider.

Thundering through Blackley, the horse awoke the peaceful inhabitants of that place by the clatter of his hoofs on the hard road.

After passing the outskirts of the village, Durham's excitement got furious; he struck the

horse a vicious blow with his riding whip, almost stunning him.

The animal swerved to one side, made for the fence on the other side of the road, and tried hard to clear it. His heels caught on the top, sending him headlong into a ditch on the other side; Durham was thrown from his seat, and, in falling, struck his head against a tree. The horse arose and galloped off, but the rider lay there motionless; never to rise again.

Early the following morning a farmer found the dead body, with the horse grazing quietly near by, and hastened off to inform the coroner.

That gentleman ordered the farmer to get his cart, put some straw in it, and then laying the dead body therein, they took him slowly and carefully back to Blackley Hall. When the party arrived there—news of the accident having been sent on in advance—Laura and her uncle Henry were waiting to receive them.

After Henry had examined the features of the dead man, he turned to the party and said, "My friends, there is some mistake here; this is not the body of my brother Richard."

Laura was struck with consternation at the remark and exclaimed in bewilderment, "Who can he be, who can he be? He has been here for

some time now, passing himself off as my uncle and your brother; and now you brand him as an impostor; oh, uncle, are you sure that after never seeing him for so many years, you are not making a terrible mistake?"

"No mistake at all," replied he; "I grant that he resembles my brother strongly, but once again I say he is not my brother Richard; and whoever he may be, he is an impostor here."

The emphatic declaration of Henry Small that the body of the dead man was not that of his brother, was fully verified by the appearance of his nephew Harry and Aleck upon the scene during the inquest; they both positively affirmed that although he was strikingly similar to the missing gentleman he was a stranger to them, and had been deceiving their friends as to his personality.

The inquest ended by a verdict of accidental death being returned; Durham being laid to rest in a pauper's grave.

After writing several letters to Mr. Small in England, to which they never received any reply, Harry and Aleck decided to go over there to ascertain what was the matter.

Their letters had been received by Durham and destroyed.

Now came the task of finding out what had become of Richard Small.

A skillful detective was employed, who traced the movements of the two men up from their leaving the ship at Liverpool to Durham's return alone to Preston on the morning following the murder.

Men were then set to work to drag the river Ribble, and in a short time the decaying body of Mr. Small was found. He was taken to Blackley and deposited in the family sepulcher.

Henry Small invited his nephew and Aleck to stay with him at Blackley Hall and partake of his hospitality during their visit to England.

Harry wrote home informing them of the melancholy death of his father, at the same time stating that he and Aleck had decided to remain for a short time in England.

That night, as the uncle, Laura, Harry and Aleck sat at the supper table, Henry Small gave his three companions a short account of his adventures in Africa. It appeared that after leaving Cape Town for the interior of the dark continent, his party had fallen into the hands of a tribe of negroes, who quickly purloined their merchandise and made them prisoners.

"They bound us," said he, "by placing our

necks in a yoke; then as a further precaution to prevent us from escaping they chained our legs together, and after many days of weary marching we at length reached their village. My companions died one after another; I hoped the grim monster would also release me, but I lived on. After going through a life of hardships which killed all the others, I was at last rescued by a party of English explorers, who conveyed me to Capetown. Here my former neighbor furnished me with sufficient money to reach England, and here I am, determined to travel no more."

As the evening rolled away the whole party drew up to the hearth, for the nights were now getting chilly. The table was pulled up to their seats, and the contents of Durham's pockets—which had been handed to Squire Small by the authorities—were placed upon it. Harry at once claimed his father's watch and some other personal property, while Laura did the same by taking a vast amount of diamond rings, bracelets, and other jewelry that belonged to her, and which Durham had wisely thought he could make good use of.

"Well, I declare," said Squire Small to Aleck—laughing, "these two are going to confiscate the

whole lot, and there will be nothing left for me and you."

"Oh, yes there will," replied Laura, smiling; "you will get all the money; I think it is Aleck who ought to complain."

While Harry and Laura were still at the table, Harry examining his father's papers, and Laura looking over her jewelry to see that none of the stones were missing, Squire Small and Aleck sat down again by the fire, directly opposite each other, Aleck being under the strong glare of the gaslight.

Suddenly Squire Small exclaimed: "Where did you get that locket, Aleck? Let me see it for a moment, please." Aleck at once handed him the locket, which he had worn all his life.

Then to relieve the suspense of Laura and her uncle Aleck quickly began to relate the particulars of the shipwreck, how he had been found in the arms of a dead lady and rescued by Ned Hormby, the locket being attached to his neck, secured by a long lady's watch chain.

"Where is the chain?" asked Mr. Small.

"My foster mother," said Aleck, "Annie Hormby, has that carefully laid away somewhere."

"This locket," said Mr. Small, "unless I am very much mistaken, I presented to my wife as a birth-

day gift just before we were married at Cape Town."

"Did you ever open it," said he, addressing Aleck.

"Yes, many a time," replied Aleck.

"I mean the interior case," said Mr. Small.

"I am not aware of an interior case; all that I ever saw inside is the plain gold panel."

"These initials are those of my wife's maiden name, Alice McLaren," remarked Mr. Small, "and I am sure it is the locket I gave her; but we will look for further proof." Bending the back hinge almost around, he pressed a secret spring and disclosed a miniature portrait of himself, with a beautiful young lady—that of his long lost wife.

"My God!" he cried in wild accents, "this accounts for her silence; her lips and hands were closed by the angry waves of the Atlantic."

Turning to Aleck after his grief had abated, he said, "You are, without doubt, my boy, and my chief hope for consolation during my declining days."

He then embraced his new found son, shook hands with his nephew, kissed Laura, and then retired for the night. Aleck accompanied him to his chamber, where the two conversed for a time, Aleck trying to cheer his father by the prospect of

the happy days they could spend together in the future. He then returned below, joining Harry and Laura, the latter remarking as he entered the room, "Oh, how glad I am; we are all cousins now, it seems."

The three newly found cousins sat around the fire conversing until late in the night. The servants had long ago retired, and the clock struck twelve as they finally separated.

Throughout the following morning the party sat together discussing their plans for the future.

Aleck and Harry wished to visit London and several other places, Mr. Small and Laura at last deciding to accompany them on their tour. As they visited the places in London which they had arranged for on their programme, Mr. Small discovered that he could not keep up the pace set by the younger ones. Frequently, when evening came, after being around all day, he returned to their hotel completely tired out by his exertions. But, after taking a short rest with an early dinner, the cousins, especially Harry and Laura, wished to go out again when the city was brilliantly illuminated to visit some place of amusement. Mr. Small did not feel equal to this, preferring to stay in his room to rest. Very often on these occasions Aleck would stay with his father to keep him

company. This left Harry and Laura often alone together.

One night after they had been to the opera, returning late, long after Mr. Small and Aleck had retired, Harry, who had been in love with his cousin Laura for some time, determined to learn his fate. He had never been in love before, but, as he sat by Laura's side behind the curtains in one of the long windows of the sitting room, he fervently asked Laura to become his bride. Laura's reply made Harry very, very happy. He took her in his arms, fondly kissing her several times, saying as he did so, "My darling girl, my darling girl!"

Soon after this they retired to dreams of future bliss.

Before Laura entered the breakfast room the following morning, Harry informed his uncle and Aleck of the engagement. They were both somewhat surprised, but well pleased on receiving the news.

Shortly after Laura appeared, her uncle and Aleck tendering her their congratulations as she sat down at the table to preside at their morning meal.

A few days afterwards they returned to Blackley Hall, where the inhabitants of that quiet village

were somewhat surprised by the mighty preparations that went on previous to Harry and Laura meeting in the little church where the two were to be made one.

Great was the excitement in Blackley Village, one lovely morning, a short time afterwards, when the gaily bedecked carriages appeared to convey the party to the ceremony which only death could dissolve.

"You will be very good, very tender to her, Harry?" said Mr. Small, after they had signed the register in the vestry. The wedding party returned to Blackley Hall, where open house was kept that day, the friends, tenants and natives of the village having all the health-drinking, fun and dancing they could wish for. As the clock in the turret struck midnight the guests departed, all happy and content, and wishing Harry and Laura "many happy years and much happiness" as they went away.

The newly married pair, amid a perfect shower of rice, the following day took the train for Manchester, where they spent the honeymoon.

During the time they were away, Mr. Small and Aleck made arrangements for the whole party proceeding to the United States, where Harry and Laura had decided to make their future home.

Mr. Small also wished to visit Darnley, to confirm the story told by Aleck and Harry concerning the shipwreck. He wished to question eye-witnesses of the scene, and ascertain if the portrait of his wife and the lady who had perished with Aleck in her arms corresponded. Personally he had no doubts; but he deemed it best, in order that no scruple might arise from others to make himself sure.

When the party arrived in New York they visited Mr. Bentley, who at once recognized the picture as that of the lady who had been drawn lifeless from the angry waves. The minister of Darnley, his wife and sister, Ned and Annie Hormby, all also avowed that this portrait was that of the dead woman.

Annie afterwards produced the chain, which was the same Mr. Small had presented to his betrothed wife.

Soon after the old wooden cross, which had stood so long over Mrs. Small's grave, was taken up and a marble monument put in its place.

The firm of Small & Robinson is still a prosperous one. Harry rewarded his father's clerk, Robinson, for his fidelity by taking him into partnership. He is the one who devotes his time and energy to the interests of their clients still, for

Harry only visits the office occasionally, the most of his time being spent in Darnley in the company of his wife and mother.

Aleck and Nellie were soon afterwards united in Darnley church.

The ceremony was a quiet one, the only guests being the Small family and the Hormbys.

On a bright winter afternoon soon after, Aleck and Nellie for the last time visited the old churchyard, the fields and seashore, which were so dear to both, and then returned as the early stars began to shine to the village. The morning following, accompanied by Mr. Small, they took their final farewell of Darnley, departing for England, where the three were to make their future home at Blackley Hall.

CHAPTER XVII.

My story is now almost finished. It is seven years since Nellie and Aleck were married, and seven happy years they have proved to them both.

As they sit by their fireside at Blackley Hall, one evening in spring, Nellie with a little girl—Laura by name—on her lap, and Aleck watching two boys, who are at the knee of their grandfather trying to persuade him to relate a story regarding some of the adventures he had with the negroes in Africa, a servant knocks at the door and says: “There is a stranger here who wishes to speak with you Mr. Aleck.”

On being told to show him in, Aleck was greatly surprised to find him to be his old acquaintance, George Smith.

Smith has now a prosperous business in Pittsburg—that of an architect and surveyor. He has crossed the ocean once more, his object in doing so being chiefly to examine the cathedrals in England and on the continent of Europe, to enlighten his mind with their style of architecture. But, being

in England again, he wishes also once more to inspect the places where he spent the early years of his life as a vagabond. He received a cordial welcome at Blackley Hall, the older ones in the family, all being glad to see him. The two boys—well, to say the least of it—they were simply astounded at the marvelous tricks he performed, and would have liked him to stay with them permanently.

Grandfather's stories were completely put in the shade during the time he spent there, and when he departed, after spending a week with them, the youngsters were continually asking "when will Mr. Smith come again, papa?"

Ned Hormby is still engaged in his old work—conducting his business as a fisherman and curer. The Mermaid is seldom used now, only at such times as Ned and his wife wish to take a sail. She has been replaced by larger and swifter vessels propelled by steam power. Ned has quite a small fleet of these vessels now.

He is at the present time the magistrate of Darnley, and is accused by his enemies of being too lenient with the offenders against the law who are brought before him. But Ned, remembering his own troubles, is satisfied with tempering justice with mercy.

Paying his cottage a last visit late at night, we see him pondering over a ledger at the table, well satisfied with the result of his profit and loss account for the past year. At his elbow we notice a large black Newfoundland dog, who bears a strong resemblance to the long-forgotten Rover.

Seated at the fireside are two ladies. In one of them we easily recognize his wife, Annie, still handsome, happy and content, but considerably stouter than she was in days of yore.

The other lady as she retires says, "Can I do anything more for you to-night, Mr. Hormby?" "No, thank you, Mrs. Atkins," replies Ned.

Continuing our way through Darnley, we enter again the more elaborate residence of Harry Small.

Here we find Harry and Laura, with a group of sweet children playing in front of the fire, while in one of the capacious armchairs at the fireside, with a walking stick close at hand, we notice a lady wearing glasses—our old friend Mrs. Small. She still complains greatly about the imaginary state of her health.

Laura's wealth placed in Harry's hands gives him the power to do an immense amount of good. He never permits an opportunity for the exercise of that power to escape him; the worthy poor in

the neighborhood have only to take their troubles to him and they are sure to be relieved by his bounty.

He is esteemed by rich and poor alike, being honored and beloved by the whole community.

Many years have passed since we last visited Blackley Hall.

Henry Small now reposes in the village churchyard, while Aleck now reigns at Blackley as 'Squire Small in his stead.

The stables are once more filled with horses, the kennels with hounds, and in the hunting parties which meet at the various residences of the country gentlemen round about, 'Squire Small is always one of the foremost at the finish.

He entered Parliament long ago, and for many years now has been a firm supporter of the Conservative party.

A lovely evening at Blackley Hall.

It is the 1st of August and the birthday of Aleck and Nellie's eldest son, Richard.

A supper and ball are given to celebrate the happy event at the hall.

The sun has set, and a glorious full moon rises, illuminating the festival and making it more pleasant than daylight.

The guests, composing their neighbors, the ten-

ants, villagers and school children, are scattered about the lawn, house and grounds, all enjoying themselves eating, drinking and dancing to the full extent of their wishes.

'Squire Small and Nellie move in and out among their guests, but Aleck is constantly by the side of his wife. He is just as tender and careful of her now as he was long, long years ago at Darnley.

So, in the midst of all this dancing, innocent fun and merry ringing of the village church bells we leave them, enjoying as much happiness as it is possible to partake of in this transitory world here below.

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